

Selected  
works of  
Jawaharlal  
Nehru

A handwritten signature in white ink, likely of Jawaharlal Nehru, positioned in the lower right quadrant of the cover. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

“So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the ‘third world’ as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote . . . the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.”

Indira Gandhi

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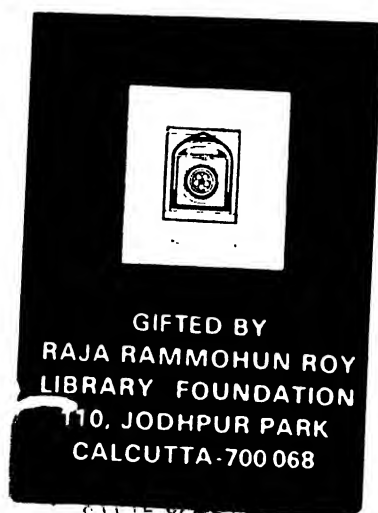




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# Selected works of Jawaharlal Nehru

Volume Fifteen



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## FOREWORD

Jawaharlal Nehru is one of the key figures of the twentieth century. He symbolised some of the major forces which have transformed our age.

When Jawaharlal Nehru was young, history was still the privilege of the West; the rest of the world lay in deliberate darkness. The impression given was that the vast continents of Asia and Africa existed merely to sustain their masters in Europe and North America. Jawaharlal Nehru's own education in Britain could be interpreted, in a sense, as an attempt to secure for him a place within the pale. His letters of the time are evidence of his sensitivity, his interest in science and international affairs as well as of his pride in India and Asia. But his personality was veiled by his shyness and a facade of nonchalance, and perhaps outwardly there was not much to distinguish him from the ordinary run of men. Gradually there emerged the warm and universal being who became intensely involved with the problems of the poor and the oppressed in all lands. In doing so, Jawaharlal Nehru gave articulation and leadership to millions of people in his own country and in Asia and Africa.

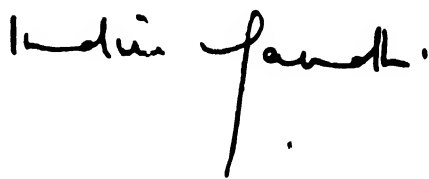
That imperialism was a curse which should be lifted from the brows of men, that poverty was incompatible with civilisation, that nationalism should be poised on a sense of international community and that it was not sufficient to brood on these things when action was urgent and compelling—these were the principles which inspired and gave vitality to Jawaharlal Nehru's activities in the years of India's struggle for freedom and made him not only an intense nationalist but one of the leaders of humanism.

No particular ideological doctrine could claim Jawaharlal Nehru for its own. Long days in jail were spent in reading widely. He drew much from the thought of the East and West and from the philosophies of the past and the present. Never religious in the formal sense, yet he had a deep love for the culture and tradition of his own land. Never a rigid Marxist, yet he was deeply influenced by that theory and was particularly impressed by what he saw in the Soviet Union on his first visit in 1927. However, he realised that the world was too complex, and man had too many facets, to be encompassed by any single or total explanation. He himself was a socialist with an abhorrence of regimentation and a democrat who was anxious to reconcile his faith in civil liberty with the necessity of mitigating economic and social wretchedness. His struggles, both within himself and with the outside world, to adjust such seeming

contradictions are what make his life and work significant and fascinating.

As a leader of free India, Jawaharlal Nehru recognised that his country could neither stay out of the world nor divest itself of its own interests in world affairs. But to the extent that it was possible, Jawaharlal Nehru sought to speak objectively and to be a voice of sanity in the shrill phases of the 'cold war'. Whether his influence helped on certain occasions to maintain peace is for the future historian to assess. What we do know is that for a long stretch of time he commanded an international audience reaching far beyond governments, that he spoke for ordinary, sensitive, thinking men and women around the globe and that his was a constituency which extended far beyond India.

So the story of Jawaharlal Nehru is that of a man who evolved, who grew in storm and stress till he became the representative of much that was noble in his time. It is the story of a generous and gracious human being who summed up in himself the resurgence of the 'third world' as well as the humanism which transcends dogmas and is adapted to the contemporary context. His achievement, by its very nature and setting, was much greater than that of a Prime Minister. And it is with the conviction that the life of this man is of importance not only to scholars but to all, in India and elsewhere, who are interested in the valour and compassion of the human spirit that the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund has decided to publish a series of volumes consisting of all that is significant in what Jawaharlal Nehru spoke and wrote. There is, as is to be expected in the speeches and writings of a man so engrossed in affairs and gifted with expression, much that is ephemeral; this will be omitted. The official letters and memoranda will also not find place here. But it is planned to include everything else and the whole corpus should help to remind us of the quality and endeavour of one who was not only a leader of men and a lover of mankind, but a completely integrated human being.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "Indira Gandhi". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long vertical stroke extending downwards from the end.

New Delhi

Chairman  
Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund

## EDITORIAL NOTE

During the period from 19 February to 2 September 1946, which this volume covers, some advance was made towards the transfer of power. With popularly elected ministries in the provinces and in the face of growing anti-imperialist feeling, the British Government sent out to India in March 1946 three Cabinet Ministers, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander, to negotiate a political settlement. After discussions with Indian leaders, the Mission proposed a constitution with a three-tier structure — a Union Centre, to which the princely States would later accede, limited to defence, foreign affairs and communications; autonomous provincial governments vested with the residuary powers; and the formation of three groups of provinces, of which two would consist of Muslim-majority provinces and one of Hindu-majority provinces, for joint administration. The groups would draft their own regional constitutions. The scheme, designed to avoid partition, also provided for a constituent assembly and an interim government representative of the main Indian parties.

Jawaharlal guided and conducted the Congress case during these negotiations with the Cabinet Mission and, after its departure in June 1946, with the Viceroy. His emphasis was on the indivisibility of the country with full safeguards for the minorities. He insisted on the withdrawal of British troops from India and on a strong interim government free from British interference and responsible to the elected legislature. The freedom of the constituent assembly could not be bound by any commitments to the Cabinet Mission Plan.

Eventually the Congress accepted the Cabinet Mission Plan as the best possible scheme under the circumstances. But the Muslim League, claiming that the Congress had not really accepted the grouping clause in the plan, withdrew its earlier acceptance and inflamed communal feelings. Jawaharlal, who had been elected President of the Congress on 9 July 1946, was invited to form the interim government and assumed office on 2 September 1946.

These constitutional activities did not absorb all his attention. Jawaharlal was also drawn into the people's movement in the princely States. With the prospect of independence in the near future he saw the need to tone up the Congress organisation. Beyond India, he envisaged a federation of Asian peoples.

Much of the material of this volume has been selected from the papers of Jawaharlal Nehru. Shrimati Indira Gandhi has made available to us

a large number of documents in her possession, and these papers have been referred to in the footnotes as the J.N. Collection. The letters in 120 bound volumes in the Nehru Memorial Library are cited as J.N. Correspondence. In some cases, only the replies written by Jawaharlal are available and not the letters received. Some other letters and notes, kept separately, are referred to as J.N. Papers. The cooperation extended by the Nehru Memorial Library in granting access to other collections in its custody is acknowledged. With the permission of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationary Office, London, we have reprinted some letters and memoranda in volumes VII and VIII of *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*. The Public Record Office, London, has permitted us to publish a letter to Stafford Cripps and the India Office Library, London, a report of an interview with Lord Wavell. The National Archives of India and the Maharashtra Government have authorised us to reproduce some material in their possession. *The Hindustan Times*, *The Tribune*, *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, *Hindusthan Standard*, *The Statesman*, *The Times of India*, *National Herald*, *The Hindu*, *Indian Daily*, *India Daily Mail*, *Malaya Tribune*, *The Straits Times*, *The New York Times* and *The Nation* have allowed us to reprint the texts of speeches and statements first published by them. Some material has also been taken from *The Bombay Chronicle* and *The Bombay Sentinel*, which have ceased publication.

Five items, traced recently, which could not be included in the relevant places in the text, have been printed in the appendix.

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THE R.I.N. MUTINY



## 1. Unrest in the Navy<sup>1</sup>

For two days I was in Garhwal cut off from newspapers. I returned last night and learnt of the serious developments in Bombay.<sup>2</sup> I feel I must go there to be of such service as I can. All other engagements and election tours will have to be cancelled accordingly. I regret greatly upsetting programmes that have already been made, but I feel that friends and colleagues will understand and excuse me. In particular, I have to apologise to my comrades in Jharia, Jamshedpur, Chota Nagpur, Cawnpore, Jhansi, Orai, Agra, Shikohabad, Tundla, Etawah and other places where meetings might have been fixed up for me to speak.

I hope they will appreciate my difficulty and forgive me for not sticking to my programme. I hope, when I have a chance, to visit these places in the future.

Meanwhile, I trust that in the elections that are coming all voters will vote for Congress candidates and thus demonstrate their will to freedom and independence, which is the main issue. All else is secondary.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 24 February 1946. From *National Herald*, 25 February 1946.
2. The ratings of the Royal Indian Navy on HMIS *Talwar* Signal Training School in Bombay struck work on 18 February 1946 in protest against low pay and poor living conditions. They were joined the next day by 20,000 ratings from the shore establishments. The strike continued for three days and on 21 February it developed into a pitched battle between them and British troops, which had been called in as Indian soldiers refused to fire. On 23 February they surrendered on the advice of the Congress with a declaration: "We surrender to India and not to Britain."

## 2. The Armed Forces and National Freedom<sup>1</sup>

On my return to Lucknow from my election tour of the interior districts of Garhwal, I learnt about the strike here of the Royal Indian Navy

1. Speech at Bombay, 26 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 27 February and *National Herald*, 28 February 1946.

ratings and the disturbances<sup>2</sup> in the city. My heart bled when I read reports of the mounting death roll. I could not resist the temptation of coming to Bombay despite my preoccupations. The R.I.N. strike and the city disturbances are interrelated. I shall take up the R.I.N. strike first.

The R.I.N. episode has opened an altogether new chapter in the history of the armed forces of India. I am very much concerned with it because it has been my conviction that our armed forces should be closely connected with the civilian population. So far there has been a big gulf between the armed forces and the civilian population. These armed forces have worked as a part of the army of occupation and have been freely used as instruments of repression by our foreign rulers.

During the Second World War, nearly 20 to 25 lakhs of our boys enlisted themselves in the army, the navy and the air force. Of these, many were politically conscious and some of them had actually been active political workers. During the war they submitted to discriminations and humiliations to which they were subjected. When the war was over, the spirit of some of these boys revolted against such treatment and resulted in protests and demonstrations.

Our armed forces have every right to revolt against the foreign ruler in order to achieve the freedom of our country. The Commander-in-Chief in his broadcast<sup>3</sup> said that he would not countenance any political intrigue in the armed forces and that discipline was the one thing most essential. I do agree with what he has said. But that army should be a free army of a free country. If the Commander-in-Chief meant that the services should take no interest in the country's fight for freedom, which is also politics of a high order, I cannot agree with him.

Our boys cannot forget politics and work as mere mercenary automations of the foreign government. Our army in my opinion should be fully conscious politically because, besides being soldiers, they have to be citizens and must know that as citizens of the country they have to discharge certain responsibilities to their people. I agree that there should be absolute discipline in the ranks of the services, but in a country like

2. In sympathy with the naval strike, hartals were organised in Bombay. Police opened fire several times and the army had to be called in. Over 200 persons were killed and property worth Rs. 7 lakhs was destroyed in the disturbances from 22 to 25 February 1946
3. In his broadcast on 25 February 1946 General Auchinleck said: "In my position as Commander-in-Chief I have nothing whatever to do with politics, and I will not countenance political intrigue in the armed forces in India. To do so would be a great disservice to India."

India to talk of discipline to a soldier, whose awakening has been real after the war, would be anomalous.

Responsible and thinking people among the services in India feel themselves standing on two stools. In the name of discipline the Indian soldier is asked to quell civil disturbances and riots, but his own inclinations are certainly against such action. What is he to do? It is certainly not a case of indiscipline if an Indian soldier refused to shoot his own countrymen fighting for his country's freedom. The word discipline has full meaning only in the army of a free country.

The Indian soldier today is different from the Indian soldier of the last war. He has seen many theatres of war and his contacts with the soldiers of free countries have opened his eyes to the forces of freedom operating in other countries. The wall of isolation which hitherto kept him away from the people of the country has disappeared. He has seen many changes in foreign countries and these changes have profoundly affected and influenced his outlook. Though he is still a member of the fighting services under the aegis of the British Government in India, his patriotism has been aroused. This has been fully demonstrated in the Indian National Army episode.

In the larger context of Indian freedom the time has come for Indians to approach the armed forces to fall in line with the fighters for the freedom of India. The present unrest among the defence services has a direct bearing on the Indian body politic. This shows the great awakening among them. The demands of the servicemen cannot be met by this Government and can be adequately and properly met by only a free national government.

The demands of the Indian naval ratings are nothing new. During the last three years there have been strikes and refusal to work by servicemen in England, but in India conditions are different. The War Secretary said the other day that the country's finances would not permit immediate increase in the pay of the ratings and men in other fighting services.<sup>4</sup> When conditions in India improve and a free government is established their demands will be dealt with.

I have all sympathy for the boys. The only thing that is not correct is that they were not fighting against heavy odds. They had no provisions and very little of ammunition, as against the well-manned and heavily armed forces against whom they were fighting. But the spirit of

4. On 22 February 1946, Philip Mason, Joint Secretary to the War Department, said that "it is impossible in the present state of India's finances to accept the proposal that the wages of the Indian servicemen should be raised to the levels of the British service, which are related to the wage levels in the United Kingdom."

revolt led these youths to provoke the pickets and thus walk into the enemy's trap.

The I.N.A. episode and the recent Royal Indian Air Force and Royal Indian Navy strikes have rendered the country a very great service.<sup>5</sup> The gulf that separated the people from the armed forces has once for all been bridged. The people and the soldier have come very close to each other. They have now come to realise that they both have one common aim — the freeing of their country from foreign yoke.

In the recent R.I.N. strike, the brave youths did commit a mistake. But we have to forgive them and do all in our power to prevent any victimisation. In a certain section of the press it was said that Sardar Patel had guaranteed that there would not be any victimisation; and that Maulana Azad had also given a similar guarantee.<sup>6</sup> Neither the Sardar nor the Maulana is in a position to give any guarantee in the present state of our slavery. It is the Government alone which can do so.

But I deprecate the mass violence in Bombay during the past four days. I have not been convinced that there is a need to employ violence for winning the freedom of India. If I am satisfied that violence is necessary to win freedom I shall be the first to give the call, and I will come out openly with such a call. But I am at present satisfied that nonviolence can still help India to march rapidly on to freedom. The attacks on the public were of an extraordinary character, the authorities having used neither tear gas nor lathis, but straightway resorted to shooting and machinegun fire. In England and America such situations are dealt with differently. In England only the day before yesterday army mutineers were merely treated to a shower bath by turning the hose on them.

You must remember that any lapse on our part will wipe off the tremendous sacrifices we have made during the last 25 years in our struggle for freedom. The valuable work of the Indian National Congress will certainly be wasted if people give expression to the urge for freedom in terms of violence.

5. Some Indian airmen went on a hunger-strike in Karachi in January 1946, seeking redressal of their grievances, which included slow demobilisation, bad residential accommodation, unhygienic environment, longer hours of work though the war was over, and poor food.
6. On 23 February 1946, the Commander-in-Chief had assured Maulana Azad that there would be no victimisation or vindictive action against the R.I.N. men and that all legitimate grievances would be sympathetically examined and redressed. On 27 February 1946 Vallabhbhai Patel said that the Government should not be harsh and vindictive.



We should be careful about the unsocial elements which are only too ready to exploit any situation to their advantage. The fight for freedom has to be carried on nonviolently as I do not want that British troops should be called to shoot down innocent citizens. The pulling down of the Union Jack or the burning of the American flag, in the belief that you were insulting those countries, is childish. You have no right to pull down a foreign flag from a private premises. I can sympathise with you if you have been compelled to hoist the Union Jack on your own buildings.

The authorities must hold an open enquiry into the cases of all R.I.N. boys, not only from Bombay but from all over India. They must be given full opportunities to defend themselves on the same lines as in the case of the officers of the Indian National Army. Our responsibility does not stop here. When things settle down and we are in power the grievances of the servicemen will have to be inquired into.

Why are the armed forces doing all this? The answer to this question is that the times have changed altogether and the rulers should be aware that India cannot be any longer governed in the way these people have been governing in the past: by playing one party against the other—the civilian against the armed forces. The armed forces have come to realise their own responsibilities towards their country and the people.

### 3. No Room for Victimisation<sup>1</sup>

Question: Do you think that the forthcoming visit of the British Cabinet delegation<sup>2</sup> would deliver the goods?

Jawaharlal Nehru: The Congress will agree to the talks in the hope and belief that they would lead to a satisfactory solution of the Indian

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 27 February 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 28 February and *The Times of India*, 28 February 1946.
2. On 19 February 1946, Attlee stated in the House of Commons that "in view of the paramount importance, not only to India and the British Commonwealth but to the peace of the world, of a successful outcome of discussions with the leaders of Indian opinion on problems arising out of the early realisation by India of self-government, the British Government has decided to send out to India a special mission of Cabinet Ministers (Secretary of State—Pethick-Lawrence, President of the Board of Trade—Cripps, and First Lord of the Admiralty—A.V. Alexander) to act in association with the Viceroy in this matter."

problem on the basis of Indian independence. It is neither good policy nor statesmanship to enter into any talks with a foreign power or authority after deciding or declaring that the talks are likely to be fruitless.

**Q:** What do you think of the prospects of success of the proposed British Cabinet delegation to India?

**JN:** We are apt to consider such a question too much in the personal context. I am so often asked what is so-and-so like and what is your reaction to such and such a person. As a matter of fact, while the personal equation counts and does make a difference, in larger problems one has to consider other impersonal questions.

A Lenin probably made all the difference to the Russian Revolution. Nevertheless, behind and round about Lenin were mighty factors working for the revolution.

Now, therefore, in considering this question of India and England, we should consider it in the context of the world today. We must realise that each country, in the final analysis, works for its own interests. On the international plane, every country works only for what might be considered international interests when they are in harmony with its own interests. So you can take it that the British delegation will work for the interests of Britain and the Indians who meet them will work for the interests of India. But this is only part of the question. What do British interests require today? And what do Indian interests from our point of view require?

In the final analysis, Britain has to choose between two possible developments. It is inevitable that in the course of the next few years India will be independent, even if Britain opposes it. If India gains its independence in spite of Britain, India, for a long time, is likely to be a country hostile to Britain, ranged in a camp hostile to Britain in the world context.

On the other hand, if India attains independence, more or less immediately by cooperating with the British, it might be possible for Britain to salvage some goodwill, as well as other interests in India. Therefore, from the British point of view, it may well be to their interests even in the near future and much more so in the distant future, to recognise Indian independence now rather than be forced to recognise it some years after having lost everything.

Similarly, India would naturally prefer a peaceful solution to one that entails a great deal of loss and suffering, which might delay India's progress later in the economic field. The costs of conflict are always great and the heaviest of these costs is the trail of hatred and bitterness that

follows. We should like to avoid all this and, therefore, we should like to do our utmost to have a peaceful settlement of India's problem. But it is dead clear that the settlement can only be reached on the basis of independence, and on no other.

There is a desire and a strong urge on both sides to come to a peaceful settlement, and it may well be that success comes to us. On the other hand, there are powerful factors working in the opposite direction. The most powerful factor is the 150-year-old tradition in British minds which has petrified British thinking in regard to India. The British, even today, including Cabinet Ministers and the Prime Minister of England, cannot get rid of this tradition which has entered into their minds, and they still talk of India, often enough, in a language reminiscent of a generation or two ago. They forget that they are addressing a sensitive, proud and virile people, who will not put up with any patronage or anything smacking of superiority.

It is obvious that India today is a volcano of four hundred million human beings. There are fair chances of some agreement based on independence emerging out of the talks that are to take place; and even if the chances were less, it would be the right policy for us to work for such an agreement to the utmost, provided we always stuck to our anchor.

Q: What is a mutiny?

JN: I understand in military parlance there is no such thing as a strike.<sup>3</sup> Everything is a mutiny. If two persons sign a letter together, it is a mutiny. A letter of protest or any kind of joint letter, I believe, is officially considered a mutiny. It is a matter for the people who know the English language to determine what is the right word. I do not see why we should worry ourselves as to what a particular word means or does not mean.

But it is obvious that where rules are so rigid even a simple joint protest, however respectfully worded, might be considered a mutiny. It becomes impossible for any kind of constitutional or semi-constitutional or any other action to be indulged in which is not a mutiny. Either one does nothing at all or one, in the official language, mutinies.

I understand that, even apart from what the Commander-in-Chief said in his broadcast, instructions have been issued, which can only be interpreted to mean that there is going to be a great deal of victimisation,

3. The Commander-in-Chief had, in a broadcast on 25 February 1946, said "the word 'strike' has been largely used. The correct word is 'mutiny' and this refers to any collective act of a few or many persons, subject to naval, military or air force law, against the legal authority of the service."

in every sense of the word, not in any technical sense of the word, and not only victimisation but a measure of terrorisation. That is, ratings and others in the navy are being first of all picked out for some kind of action against them. Secondly, where there is not even a single evidence for that, it is suggested something should still be done so as to have an opportunity of punishing the people against whom there is no evidence, with the object, of course, of frightening and terrorising others. Now, that kind of action is obviously in direct conflict, both in spirit and letter, with the assurances given in the Assembly.

Such a course of action is bound to have repercussions not only on public opinion but on the armed forces in the country. It shows quite an extraordinary lack of foresight from even the narrowest point of view.

Q: What has the Congress proposed to do in case of such victimisation?

JN: As I suggested yesterday, we shall ask for a public trial. If there is to be a trial, it should be public. Secondly, the Congress proposes to organise the defence of those who are being tried. This is as far as I can see for the moment in regard to these matters. I do not quite know how things will shape themselves and what the Defence Consultative Committee will do.<sup>4</sup> But this question, like any other question, cannot be just isolated from both the larger question of the army and its grievances, and the still larger question of the political future of India.

Most of our difficulties arise from the fact that we are in a period of intense transition. It is absurd for high army authorities to continue to think in terms of some past years — in pre-war terms — when the army was isolated from the people and was a relatively small force — a small professional force. They will have to revise their outlook completely and realise that the present army, navy and air force are of a different calibre, and further that the Indian public is greatly interested in them.

Q: Do you approve of underground movements?

JN: In the larger sense of functioning effectively, especially when the way is clear for effective functioning in the open, any other kind of functioning becomes ineffective and just useless.

During the last two or three years when effective functioning was difficult, one could understand other kinds of functioning. One may agree

4. The Defence Secretary stated in the Central Assembly on 23 February 1946 that a consultative machinery, with which the political parties would be associated, would be set up to inquire into the causes of the naval mutiny.

or disagree. But when there are numerous avenues of functioning in the open, it is absurd to function in secret or otherwise, because it really means you are not functioning in secret from governmental authority. You are functioning in secret from your people and no mass movements are built up by underground methods.

Generally speaking, I do not approve of underground movements at all, except when they offer the only way of action. Underground movements strike at the root of mass action.

Q: Do you approve of Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali's actions during the past two or three years?

JN: I do not approve of all she did.

Q: What is your comment on Mrs. Aruna Asaf Ali's appeal to the country to boycott British goods?<sup>5</sup>

JN: For the moment I cannot give you a straight answer as to how far it is a feasible proposition in the present context. At present there is a vacuum of goods in India. A vacuum tends to be filled. The vacuum of scarcity of goods in India will be filled by either goods manufactured in India or foreign ones.

But foreign goods can come in limited quantities and probably more goods from Britain will come than from other sources. By a vague appeal if you think you can prevent that vacuum from being filled, I am not sure of that. One has to see how things develop in future. Generally Congressmen do not buy foreign goods.

Q: What is your view in the controversy about violent and nonviolent techniques?

JN: Since there is considerable confusion in the country about violence and nonviolence, I would like to say a few words.

I can only express my opinion for the moment, but it may represent many other people's opinion also. I think in our fight for freedom today as yesterday, nonviolence, the general nonviolent technique, is the desirable technique, and is the only desirable technique, both in regard to internal conditions in India and in regard to world conditions.

5. On 13 February 1946, Aruna Asaf Ali said that a large quantity of British-made cloth had flooded the Bombay markets. As boycott of foreign goods was a part of the Congress programme, the Congress should not allow the import of foreign cloth into India.

It seems to me obvious that if one thinks in terms of violence, one must think in terms of superior violence. It is folly to put up inferior violence to oppose superior violence. No general of an armed force does that. Of course, in moments of crisis, people act as they feel at the moment.

When you are considering these problems, you think not in terms of a particular crisis, but in terms of a general policy. I have not a shadow of doubt that for us in India today the right policy is the nonviolent policy.

**Q:** Why do you praise the I.N.A. if you feel nonviolent action is best suited to India at present?

**JN:** One of the potent reasons why I say nonviolence is best suited to India is because of the I.N.A. It is one thing to praise those who have fought gallantly, violently or nonviolently, for the freedom of India, and it is a totally different thing to consider the problem of India in its present context. The I.N.A. used violence and it failed. But if it had succeeded, the questioner might have advanced the argument that violence had paid.

The I.N.A. failed, not because of its violence or nonviolence, but because of external forces. The I.N.A. was arrayed against greater forces in the world situation.

You cannot compare the I.N.A. to the situation in India, because the I.N.A. was an external situation and the question of nonviolent action in that particular context hardly arose outside India.

It seems to me — friends will forgive me for saying so — this question of violence and nonviolence is often thought and considered in some infantile context, in some 18th century context. People forget that we are in the middle of the 20th century. When you think in terms of internal revolutionary violence to free a country, then you must remember always the violence at the disposal of the state to crush this internal violence. During the last 150 years, state violence has completely changed. It is so immensely superior to any public violence that there is no comparison between them. When people talk of barricades, people think in terms of the French Revolution. Roughly speaking, 157 or 155 years ago, there was not too much — I emphasise the words too much — difference between armed or semi-armed groups and the military forces of the state.

The only people who can offer effective violence today are the armed forces, with possession of weapons. Even the armed forces cannot effectively make use of violence, unless supplies to them are fairly con-

tinuous. Even the armed forces are pretty helpless before the new inventions of war such as planes, tanks and bombs.

For a moment, we should forget this ethical argument about violence and nonviolence and consider it on pure merits of expediency if you like. Unless it is the violence of the armics, any other violence is infantile.

Violence, just petty insurrectionary type of action, may frighten occasionally or may create difficult situations occasionally, but in the final analysis, must go down before superior violence. Further it may create situations of such instability that it may take a long time to establish any kind of equilibrium.

Political freedom has got to be seen, not merely in the context of suddenly capturing the so-called citadel occupied by the enemy. That will be a symbolic act of political freedom. Political freedom is to be seen in the context of that freedom not only surviving but establishing itself as a well-recognised authority, and then our being able to carry through vast measures of social change which we envisage. If political changes take place suddenly and only in a symbolic way, then social changes become difficult or delayed or the equilibrium is so upset that it takes a long time for us even to think in terms of social changes. Then obviously we will have lost many valuable years and probably these very years will be the testing time to decide whether we are to survive or not as a political entity. Therefore, we cannot take too narrow a view of the immediate result, without thinking of the rest. Indeed, you can think of nothing at all today unless you think of more or less the whole world context.

Therefore, I suggest to you that the sporadic insurrectionary type of action is ruled out today from the point of view of pure expediency. To think of insurrectionary methods, small insurrectionary methods of the early 19th century type in the 20th century is, I think, to misunderstand entirely the present situation in India and the world. The insurrectionary type of action is always the action of a small and weak minority which tries to capture power by some sudden action.

We in India are neither a weak nor a small minority. Ours is a powerful movement. For us to indulge in any small-scale sporadic violent action is just to ignore, and not to utilise, that powerful movement of the great majority in India and to hinder its functioning. You have mighty weapons in your hands and, instead of using them to the best advantage, you go about with a small pair of nail scissors and think you can do a great deal as opposed to a big gun. It is absurd.

What I see in many places in India today is the vague thought that, by rushing into some kind of sporadic action, people are speeding the

revolution in India. They are doing nothing of the kind. They are just hindering it.

If there is going to be violence, it should be on the biggest scale possible at the right time with the right preparation. Small scale violence comes in the way, not only of nonviolence, but of big scale violence. It is not a preparation for violent struggle. It is a hindrance to it, and it is only a notice to the opposite party to prevent in every way the revolutionary movement from developing.

Q: Do you brand everybody who indulges in violence as a rowdy or a hooligan?

JN: I do not brand everybody who indulges in violence as a rowdy or a hooligan. There are obviously two types of people, some who are the reverse of rowdies or hooligans. There are a number of people who indulge in violence, or under the cover of violence they do things which have nothing to do with the political outlook. Where there is sporadic action, it facilitates anti-social elements to function.

Q: If the people had been armed with rifles would they not have fought as brave soldiers?

JN: This is again an 18th century type of question. You do not fight machineguns with rifles. As between two violent opposing forces the big gun tells. If the people had rifles, probably they would have shot down some people and there would have been more casualties. In this connection, I may refer to the Easter Week rising in Ireland in Dublin in 1916. When you match a gun with a gun, the big gun always succeeds.

Obviously there was tremendous sympathy in the city of Bombay for the naval ratings. I think a great deal of excitement had been caused by the gunfire, which was more or less harmless, but still which made the people think that a pitched battle was being fought in the Bombay harbour, which it was not.<sup>6</sup>

When there is excitement, it is very easy to put a spark to that excitement. There are all manner of groups in the city, who immediately rush in to exploit such a situation to the advantage of their own respective groups which call themselves revolutionary, but which cannot

6. This refers to the firing incident at the Castle Barracks in Bombay on 21 February 1946 when the Indian soldiers under the command of British officers were ordered to shoot at the ratings. The ratings who did not want to fire back at them addressed the soldiers over the loudspeaker in Hindi: "Brothers! We are not fighting to fill our stomachs with better food and for a softer life. We are fighting for the country's freedom." The firing ceased and then a soldier signalled that they were firing blanks.



function normally in public, because their revolution is of the eighteenth century variety.

The Communists consider themselves very revolutionary, but I consider them counter-revolutionary. Far from being revolutionary, they are actually conservative.

Q: Should not the city of Bombay observe a hartal in response to the Royal Indian Naval ratings' appeal?<sup>7</sup>

JN: The R.I.N. Central Strike Committee had no business to issue such an appeal. I will not tolerate this kind of thing. Fifteen men, however much I may like them, knowing nothing about the situation in Bombay, in India or the world, having gone over the heads of everyone in Bombay and all recognised political parties, have issued an appeal that there should be a hartal. The obvious course open to the Strike Committee was not to issue such an appeal to the three million citizens of Bombay over the heads of everyone in Bombay, but to meet the recognised leaders, and put before them their case and ask whether a hartal was feasible. It was for the political leaders — be they of the Congress or of the League — to decide after taking various factors into consideration.

Q: In view of the grievances in the army, navy and air force, which often lead to strikes and mutiny, should not the Congress leadership think of canalising these grievances in a constitutional manner and give an effective substitute, as an alternative to mutiny, and should not the Congress leadership give a clear line of policy anticipating and providing for incidents of the type which happened in Bombay, instead of leaving the interpretation of violence and nonviolence according to the discretion of individuals?

JN: It would be desirable if we could do that. But I wish you to realise that we are not in a static position. It is an extraordinary change which takes place from day to day and hour to hour. So far as this can be done by the Congress and other public organisations, it should be done.

But in trying to do it, it assumes a certain static character of the present Government apparatus which we do not recognise in the sense that

7. On 22 February 1946, the Central Naval Strike Committee appealed to Indian political leaders to support the striking seamen, saying that "they have been suffering untold hardships regarding pay and food, and most outrageous social discrimination."

we want to change it immediately. Therein lies the difficulty about canalising and organising things. To some extent it should be done. To the fullest extent it means recognising and perpetuating the present arrangement whereby the armed forces are ultimately under the control of the India Office.

We want to change it rapidly so that the army should be completely under Indian control. Then, of course, the question becomes completely different. In so far as these grievances can be canalised and presented properly and effectively it should be done. But I am not quite clear how it can be done. Presumably it can be done officially publicly and non-officially privately.

**Q:** Is the Government of India justified in awarding seven years' imprisonment to Capt. Burhanuddin of the I.N.A.?<sup>8</sup>

**JN:** The sentences on Capt. Burhanuddin and on Capt. Rashid are more or less of the same variety. I do not know much about the facts of the case, but I feel that the Government, having adopted one policy in regard to the I.N.A., should not have diverged from it, especially when it is only a question of time when a people's government would release them.

If the Government's argument that these men indulged in acts of cruelty is to be accepted, I may ask why action has not been taken against those who indulged in much worse acts of cruelty against political prisoners and others in internment camps. Proofs have been adduced about the grossest forms of cruelty indulged in, in prison camps, and yet the Government has done nothing to punish those offenders.

Even if a person in the I.N.A. in a moment of excitement or through force of circumstances had indulged wrongly in acts of cruelty, in the new situation that has been created now in India, it is surely very unwise to pass these sentences which are going to be set aside at the earliest possible moment.

**Q:** Is it not necessary to adopt a revolutionary programme of significance in India now?

8. An officer of the I.N.A. who was formerly of the Baluch regiment was alleged to have ordered two men, who had been caught trying to desert, to be hung up by their arms and flogged by a whole battalion. When the two men were taken down one of them was dead. Burhanuddin was sentenced for "culpable homicide amounting to murder".

JN: A revolutionary programme of significance does not mean the breaking of heads occasionally and the destruction of property. My conception of a revolutionary programme of significance is one aimed at increasing the standard of living of the people of India within a space of five or ten years.

If a programme towards this end is drawn up, and practical methods are suggested to implement it, I would call it a revolutionary programme of significance. But if some people think that a revolutionary programme of significance means merely the breaking of heads, I would emphatically say that the breaking of heads does not necessarily mean that a new social or economic order will follow.

The background of the whole European revolutionary movement is one of underground activity. But in India conditions are different, chiefly because our whole method of action is different. The method of action involved here may be good or bad. But it does permit of an activity of a type which will not be tolerated in Europe by governmental authorities. On the whole, underground activity in Europe has not achieved any remarkable success. In the case of Russia, it is completely different. Very extraordinary circumstances preceded the Russian Revolution. But we cannot duplicate such circumstances anywhere else.

Q: What is your plan to combat communalism in the country?

JN: I think that the best way of combating communalism is to place greater stress on economic issues. I cannot, for the present, say what the results of the elections in the provinces are going to be. About the United Provinces, I can say the real conflict in the rural areas is between the peasant and the landlord. The election campaign has shown that the Congress in the U.P. stands for the peasants and the Muslim League, in collaboration in some constituencies with the Hindu Mahasabha, for the landlords.

One argument that was put forward by the supporters of the candidates of the League was that if the Congress came to power, it would demolish mosques and take away the copies of the Quran. Such an argument is really unfortunate. In the towns, the issues are not clear. They are very much mixed.

Q: Have you not exhibited indiscipline in the Congress ranks by coming over to Bombay when you were asked by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel not to do so?

JN: I do not think so. I may have shown a certain lack of wisdom, but that must be always excused. In any case, it is not indiscipline.

#### 4. Portents<sup>1</sup>

"The sky is black with chickens coming home to roost" said the Chinese Ambassador in London soon after Pearl Harbour and the early Japanese victories in South East Asia. The war has been won and the Axis powers lie prostrate and helpless. But the sky is darker than ever and the victors flounder helplessly in the morass of their past deeds. Problems arise everywhere which they are unable to solve, and only dimly they are beginning to realise that new forces are at work which are beyond their control. Asia was ignored for two hundred years and little Europe occupied the world's stage. World politics were the politics of Europe's scramble for colonies and seaways. When America came of age she too thought in terms of Europe; the other countries were just colonies or dependencies or spheres of influence of European powers.

But suddenly Asia is standing up and history is taking a new turn. The nerve centres of politics and economics are shifting and Europe is gradually reverting to its geographical position as an extension of Asia. This process may take some time to complete itself, but undoubtedly it has begun and the pace of events is such now that the track of centuries may be covered in a few years.

India, we were told, was to be put in cold storage till the duration of the war. So outwardly it was, but under the surface of events mighty changes were taking place, and now we see the new India emerging from its shell with all the accumulated passion and anger of long suppression. The chickens are coming home to roost and the sky is dark for those who had thought that they could play about with the people of India. British policy has at last come up against a wall it cannot surmount. And if American policy, for its own 'ends, chooses to support British imperial policy, it will find also that the wall cannot be scaled.

The recent occurrences in Bombay, the strike of naval ratings and all that followed, have removed the veil of our superficial politics and given us a glimpse of the real mind of India. We have had many glimpses of this during the past few years. What happened in August 1942 and afterwards, what those of us, who have travelled about India'...

1. Undated and incomplete draft article clearly written towards the end of February 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



MUTINY IN THE NAVY, BOMBAY, FEBRUARY 1946



IN MALAYA, MARCH 1946

## 5. The Strike of Army Signalmen<sup>1</sup>

Friends and colleagues in Jubbulpore have pressed me to visit the city in view of the situation that has arisen there owing to the strike of the signalmen and others belonging to the Indian army. Such facts as are known have been supplied to me.

I gather that the men on strike have remained completely peaceful. Further that, on 28 February, a considerable number of them were injured, some seriously, by some kind of a bayonet charge made upon them in their barracks. The strikers' demands were for better treatment in regard to rations, amenities, etc., and equality of treatment between Indian and British soldiers. There were also some political demands. These latter demands have been made by national organisations and it is natural that Indian soldiers should also feel that way.

Nevertheless, such demands should not normally be made the basis of a strike. They involve large issues and indeed, in the last analysis, the issue of India's freedom. What steps should be taken and when in regard to this fundamental issue in India, it should be for the nation to decide through its leaders and representatives. It is undesirable for any group to force the issue.

Every Indian must inevitably sympathise with their demands for better treatment. It must be remembered also that most of these Indian soldiers, as the soldiers of other countries, have been through many years of gruelling wartime experience. There is among them a feeling of weariness and a desire to go home. We have seen recently strikes by American and British servicemen.

In India, there is an ever present feeling of resentment at the differential treatment accorded to Indian officers and other ranks. What was meekly submitted to in the past can no longer be borne, for the Indian people today are proud and virile and determined to be free. This urge for freedom runs through us all, whether we are civilians or army-men.

It is in the light of the new context that every situation has to be judged. We all want discipline in the army, for an army without discipline is no army. But discipline today must be considered in the context of the problem of India's freedom and not as a slave discipline of former times.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 3 March 1946. *National Herald*, 6 March 1946.

Our problems are those of achieving freedom, and refashioning our civil and military structure in the light of that freedom. It is not possible to suppress the urge for freedom in the old way, for it makes the urge more acute. It solves nothing, for it is impossible to suppress and punish a whole nation. I trust that the military authorities in India will bear this in mind and function accordingly. To the Indian soldiers, I would assure that their cause is also our cause; it is the cause of the nation. That cause ultimately is the freedom and independence of India. We are happy that the old barriers between armymen and civilians are breaking down. This new situation brings new responsibilities on all of us, and we must not function light-heartedly and without thought, or else we waste the opportunity that awaits us.

Soldiers and civilians should not indulge in violence, for the obvious reason, apart from other reasons, that it will only benefit our opponents who have superior violence on their side.

So our struggle should be carried on peacefully and in a disciplined manner. It is right that civilians should express their sympathy for legitimate demands. But they must realise that adoption of violence is not the method.

We want no victimisation of our men in the Navy, the Army or the Air Force. They are brave young men, and even if a few go astray in a moment of excitement, they should be dealt with leniently and in a friendly manner. In any event, so far as we are concerned, we will do our best to prevent victimisation. But it is obvious that we can make no promises and give no guarantees, for only a free India can do so. One promise we can give and we will give. Struggle till we achieve full freedom and independence.



## THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN



## 1. A Mood of Revolt<sup>1</sup>

If the British Cabinet Mission fails to solve the pressing and urgent problems which are clamouring for solution, a political earthquake of devastating intensity will sweep the entire country.

We have for long put a severe restraint on ourselves, but now no one can say how long this self-imposed restraint will continue, or continue at all.

The whole country is in the throes of a serious discontent and in a mood of revolt. We are sitting on the edge of a volcano which may erupt at any moment. A spark may set it ablaze. You have seen what happened in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. These pre-storm conditions are not limited to big cities only, but are found even in remote villages.

The truth is that the people, who are tired and fed up, want to end foreign domination immediately.

We will talk to the Cabinet Mission as a free people of one country would talk to the free people of another country. The Congress will try to settle the pressing fundamental issues by negotiation and compromise, because we do not want to plunge the country into fiery ordeals every now and then, if that can be avoided. But what I wish to make abundantly clear is that the Congress is not prepared to withdraw even an inch from its demand for complete independence.

Another warning that I would like to give is that we cannot afford to wait any longer, because the nation is on its feet and clamouring to resume its onward march. Therefore, if the British Cabinet Mission fails to resolve the deadlock, a serious political earthquake, whose tremors will be felt far beyond the boundaries of this country, will follow. India will rise in revolt, not because I, or the Congress, wants it, but because it has lost all patience and is full of anger against the British.

The naval strike in Bombay is of great political importance. Our boys in their zeal might have done a few things with which we may disagree, but no one can minimise its importance or wash away the powerful reaction, which has been created in the country. It has demonstrated how the mind of the Indian army is working. It has also

1. Speech at Jhansi, 2 March 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 5 March and *The Hindustan Times*, 4 March 1946.

shown that the iron wall which the British created between the Indian army and the Indian people has collapsed and broken to pieces, and that Indian soldiers, who mostly hail from the peasant class, are as sensitive to political and economic exploitation as their brethren in fields and factories.

The three I.N.A. officers, Shah Nawaz, Sehgal and Dhillon, have not been released owing to popular agitation, as is generally believed, but they were released because the Indian army had demanded their release and expressed sympathy with them in unmistakable terms.

The year 1946 will be a most eventful and decisive year because far-reaching issues will be settled, or will be on their way to settlement. In other words, it means that the 150-year-old British rule in this country has almost come to an end. If it has not ended already we will end it within two or three years. But one thing is clear from the point of view of history. Foreign rule in India is now a thing of the past. The British also realise it and, therefore, they no longer talk in terms of political reservations for themselves. They want to know from us if we would give them trade facilities in a free India.<sup>2</sup> Well, I tell them frankly: it all depends on how you quit our country. If you leave a trail of bitterness behind, we cannot have any truck with you.

I accuse the British Government of evading many vital issues which demand solution. The Government, which cannot solve these problems, will be swept away when these issues take violent forms. This is precisely what is happening in the country. The problems of poverty, starvation and illiteracy can be solved only with the concerted effort and cooperation of the people, which a foreign government can never have.

The Congress has decided not to cooperate with the Indian food delegation because, in the first place, it is being sent under the auspices of a government which does not enjoy the confidence of the people, and in the second place, we cannot cooperate with a government which does nothing to remove corruption, bribery, famine and a score of other evils rampant in the country.

One fundamental difference between the outlook of the Congress and that of the Muslim League is that while the Muslim League is incapable of tackling any issue without the help of the foreign government, the Congress does just the opposite. The League is seeking the Government's support to get Pakistan. But suppose British rule is out of the picture, at whose door will the League knock? They will have to directly negotiate with their own countrymen, and reach a settlement with them, or,

2. British private investment in India at this time exceeded £ 200 million.

alternatively, they will have to fight them. But as long as the foreign element remains in India, the League will depend on it for help, and consequently, a solution of any problem by compromise will become impossible.

When someone asked Mr. Jinnah recently how he would protect the independence of Pakistan, he promptly replied: "We would keep British troops there. We would allow Britain to control our foreign relations." Similarly, Sir Nazimuddin, the former premier of Bengal, also said: "If Pakistan is not granted, we would like the British Government to remain here at least for 20 years."

This is a most degrading stand. It is a stumbling-block to independence. The Muslim League can demand Pakistan, but any attempt to retain the country under foreign control is a most disgraceful bargain. If Pakistan wants to remain under British rule, it is so even today, and I ask Mr. Jinnah what is all this clamouring for.

Pakistan in its present form, as envisaged by the League, will never be acceptable to the Congress. It is definitely not in the interests of Muslims. It will retard the progress of the country. Pakistan, whether accepted or rejected, is a positive danger to the country. The League should learn from what is happening in Iran<sup>3</sup> and other small European countries which, though technically independent, are ruled and dictated to by the big powers. Besides, Pakistan still remains unspecified. Then the Frontier Province has positively rejected it.<sup>4</sup> Assam is predominantly a non-Muslim province.<sup>5</sup> In the Punjab the Muslim League can claim the majority of the Muslims behind the demand for Pakistan, but there, too, it cannot compel the powerful minorities — Sikhs and Hindus — to accept Pakistan.<sup>6</sup>

The Muslim League is an organisation of nawabs and taluqdars. It raises the Pakistan slogan mainly to sidetrack the problems of poverty

3. There were disturbances in north Iran<sup>\*</sup> which was under Soviet control. The Russian army prevented Iranian troops from entering Azerbaijan to deal with the rebellion.
4. The elections in the North West Frontier Province were fought on the basis of Pakistan. Out of the 36 Muslim seats the Congress contested 28, and won 19 as against 15 of the Muslim League. The Congress polled 207,134 votes as against 145,420 votes polled by the Muslim league.
5. In Assam, which Jinnah claimed for Pakistan, the Congress won an absolute majority in the provincial elections.
6. In the Punjab, the Muslim League, having captured 75 out of 86 Muslim seats in a house of 175 and being thus the largest single party, could not form a ministry. A coalition ministry of the Congress, the Akalis and the Unionists was formed in March 1946 on the basis of an agreed economic programme.

and starvation and to safeguard feudalism and capitalism for the benefit of a handful of persons. It does not want abolition of the zamindari system or nationalisation of industries, because such steps will affect their interests. As a matter of fact, the Pakistan slogan is meant to cover up their position. Otherwise there is nothing common between a nawab and a Muslim peasant in Oudh, where the Muslim taluqdars are seeking the help of the Hindu taluqdars to defeat the Congress candidate in the election. The Hindu taluqdars are heartily extending cooperation.

The League, the Akali Dal, the Unionist Party, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party are allies of Britain in the present situation. The Communists, who talk about the abolition of capitalism and the zamindari system, are helping the Muslim League nawabs to win the elections. The Communists have no principles and have become a counter-revolutionary force. In 1942 they opposed the independence movement and opposed strikes by factory workers. But now they are brave. They have organised demonstrations at Bombay and Karachi. I know the Government is helping the Communists in some places to defeat the Congress. I appeal to you to organise yourselves under the Congress banner to achieve independence, which is in sight, and to maintain it as a brave people.

## 2. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
3 March 1946

My dear Krishna,  
I have just received your letter of the 20th February.<sup>2</sup> On the whole I agree with your analysis but, as you know, few people here think in terms of the world situation. You must also remember that often what we say here is torn from its context and flashed across, giving a totally wrong impression.

I wish I had some leisure. But this election business and other matters have overwhelmed me. There is a possibility of my going to Malaya for ten days or so about the middle of the month. Of course I do not want this to clash with the visit of Pethick-Lawrence, Cripps and Co.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Krishna Menon had written that Britain would make India once more a pawn in her imperial design.

I think I wrote to you once about K.B. Menon's case in the Privy Council. I now learn that Polak was engaged after all. It is extraordinary how blind to obvious things our people are. Anyway I have informed Govind Swaminadhan that he should inform Polak that you must be consulted about arrangements. I feel we must proceed with the appeal and do our best for K.B. Menon. He is a man whom I like and respect. So I hope you will take especial interest in the matter.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

### 3. The Errors of the Communist Party<sup>1</sup>

Although the number of the working class in India is very small, its importance is great and it is increasing every day. When the British first came to this country, they ruined its industry and reduced the masses to poverty and starvation. Our task, when we come into power, would be to reduce the pressure on land and to build up our industries — large-scale as well as cottage industries — and wipe off poverty and unemployment of the masses. Barring a handful of well-to-do people, the vast majority of the populace are poor. This state of affairs can be changed only when we win freedom.

Frivolous issues have been raised by reactionary elements at the time of the election like 'religion is in danger' and Pakistan. These questions have nothing to do with the issue of freedom, and these questions are raised to throw the real issue into the background and thereby deceive the masses. I want you to understand the real problem that we face.

I appreciate the sentiments of the Muslims, but the way in which the issue of Pakistan has been raised is utterly wrong. Even if Pakistan can be realised, it is possible only after the country wins freedom. One fails to understand the logic of the clamour that there ought to be no freedom unless the question of Pakistan is decided. This amounts to strengthening the hands of the foreign government to stave off the independence of the country. But it is natural for the leaders of the Muslim League to raise this false issue as they are a set of big landlords who will be benefited by keeping India in bondage.

1. Address to mill workers, Kanpur, 8 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 9 March 1946.

I am surprised at the attitude of the Indian Communists who want to create a dozen or perhaps more divisions in India.<sup>2</sup> The part that the Communist Party has played during recent years has no relation to Russia and communism, and if there is any party which has done the maximum harm to the cause of communism, it is the Communist Party of India which, by its policy, has isolated itself from the masses. The Communists, who are today siding with the Muslim League and opposing the Congress in the elections, are demonstrating that their party is far from being revolutionary and is utterly reactionary. I am glad that the masses have seen the party in its true colours with the result that not a single Communist has been elected to the Assembly in any province.

There is no organisation other than the Congress which can tackle the large issues that face this country. Other organisations like the Muslim League and the Communist Party can only create obstructions and obstacles in the way of the Congress in its efforts to solve the problems of the country.

The Communist Party in order to regain its lost position is talking of strikes. The Congress has never avoided strikes or struggles. But sporadic actions are bound to fritter away our energies, which have to be stored up for use at the right moment. I, therefore, warn the people from being misled by false slogan-mongering indulged in by the Communist Party.

Remember, this is the most critical period that we are passing through. The structure of imperialism in India is shaking and freedom is fast approaching. The demand — rather our declaration — today is that the British should quit India.

I appeal to the workers to vote for the Congress candidates. Every vote cast against the Congress and for the Communists will be a vote to perpetuate slavery.

2. In its election manifesto, the Communist Party of India had demanded seventeen sovereign states based on linguistic entities.

#### **4. Sitting on a Volcano<sup>1</sup>**

I have come to Calcutta specially to attend the university convocation and a meeting of the Indian Science Congress Association Committee.

1. Statement to the press, Calcutta, 8 March 1946. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10 March 1946.



Electioneering was not my purpose in coming here. I would be glad to visit some of the Bengal districts, and I have long wanted to do so quite apart from elections. But the meeting of the Working Committee and my proposed visit to Malaya prevent me from touring Bengal.

On arrival here, however, friends have asked me to visit some of the labour areas in and around Calcutta on the 9th afternoon and pay brief visits by air on the 10th to Chittagong and Dacca. I accepted these invitations chiefly because I am eager to meet the industrial workers round about Calcutta and also because I should like anyhow to go to Chittagong and Dacca. Dacca I have never visited before, and I am sorry that on this occasion my visit will be brief. But even a glimpse is better than no visit at all.

The election work is only a very minor item in my programme, that too of temporary importance. Wherever I go, I make it a point to convey the message of the Congress to the people, that is the message of freedom, and to tell them to be ready to face whatever may come off in the fateful months of this year.

Obviously, the only organisation in India that can meet the challenge of the time is the Congress. Other organisations may help a little or hinder a little, but they cannot solve any problems or shoulder any big responsibility. It is in this context, and the still larger context of the modern world, that we have to view our problems. We must not get lost in petty squabbles or arguments. The contrast today between public feeling on the one hand and petty issues, which worry politicians as a rule, on the other is extraordinarily marked.

We see all over India an astonishing degree of enthusiasm for freedom and independence, almost a reckless mood in pursuit of the ideal, and in this all people, Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians and others join, whenever any little spark touches them. On the other hand, we see even in the election campaign arguments about issues which do not matter at all, or which arise incidentally.

Religion comes into the picture with the slogan that religion is in danger, though everybody knows that there is bound to be complete freedom of religion in free India with all that it implies.

Even Pakistan, of which so much is heard, cannot be considered an immediate issue in any real sense. Pakistan becomes a parody of freedom even within its own boundaries when it is said, as it has been said by the leaders of the Muslim League, that British troops will defend it. It is thus only a continuation of British domination for an indefinite period. So this conflict between a real and united feeling on the one hand and the irrelevant issue of Pakistan on the other continues.

What happened in Delhi yesterday is again an evidence of many things, good and bad.<sup>2</sup> It is a warning to us that all of us today sit on a volcano. Elections and petty issues are not likely to make much difference to this volcano, for Indian feeling to be volcanic in its ardent desire for independence is good. But it is definitely bad for volcanoes to erupt without regard to consequences. They bury both the good and the bad in the lava that flows out of them.

It is definitely a bad sign for people to indulge in violence and burning of public buildings. This can do no good to anybody. The public property that is destroyed belongs after all to the nation. So the lesson we have to learn is to keep our fire burning in our mind and heart and at the same time we should control and direct this mighty energy into right channels.

2. The first week of March 1946 was observed as victory week to celebrate the victory of the Allies in the Second World War. On 7 March 1946, six persons were killed, 20 injured and property worth Rs. 10 lakhs was destroyed in Delhi during demonstrations against the 'victory week' celebrations.

## 5. The Dawn of Great Things<sup>1</sup>

We are on the threshold of independence. It is true that the gates of independence have not yet been opened, but it only rests with us to throw the gates open.

The millions of India, workers and peasants, villagers and citizens have by their sacrifice paved the way for this independence. The independence that we are striving for does not mean power for a handful of men. Our swaraj will secure the rule of the people. We should aim at attaining such a swaraj which will enable every Hindu and Muslim to work for the betterment of the country. Our swaraj aims at ending poverty, disease and illiteracy which beset us today.

The year 1946 will see the dawn of great things. The 150-year-old British rule in India is fast approaching its end. Whatever we do we should direct our activities in such a way as to benefit the 400 million

1. Address to a workers' rally at Jagaddal, 9 March 1946. From *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 March 1946.

people of India, and not a few men at the top. If we cannot improve the condition of the poor and the oppressed, how can we expect to improve the condition of the country as a whole?

There is a great organisation in the country, and that organisation is the Congress. It is an organisation of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and other communities. Its gates are open to members of every community. It has the strength to fight the British Government.

All of you should remember how the masses are ready to suffer for the cause of the country. You have seen how the masses had withstood all attempts of suppression and faced bullets and other atrocities. It is impossible to suppress a mass upsurge. Now that you are on the threshold of freedom you must act judiciously.

The election is a minor issue though it has its importance. It will be over in the next 15 or 20 days. After the elections, great events are going to befall the country. The British Government does not want the Congress to win in the elections, because our slogan has been "Quit India" and nothing else.

If anybody wants Pakistan you cannot deny it to him. The Congress will never impose anything on anybody. But the first question before you is the question of independence.

The Communists have done great harm to the country. They have weakened the country. They have raised the slogan "Congress-League Unite." But they have never worked for unity. All their slogans have ended in mere talks.

It is time for us to organise and prepare ourselves for the great things that are going to take place in the country in the near future. If you want the present state of affairs to end and usher in a glorious era of swaraj, you should vote for the Congress nominee, Shri Niharendu Dutta Majumdar.

## **6. At the Door of Swaraj<sup>1</sup>**

I express my regret for my brief stay at Dacca. I have been touring different parts of the country and addressing the people since my release nine months ago. I have never seen such big gatherings of men and

1. Speech at Dacca, 10 March 1946. Based on reports from *Hindusthan Standard*, 12 March, and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 March 1946.

women as have been witnessed in recent months. In 1942 it was said that the Congress had been crushed, and that it could never again be powerful. But what is the position today? The Congress has never been so powerful as it is today. The strength of the people has increased manifold, to an extent never seen before. The spirit of restlessness is widespread as never experienced before. I know why this is so. Today an extraordinary situation has arisen in the country. After years of struggle, India has reached the door of swaraj. The door is still closed. We will have to open it.

The 150-year-old British rule in this country is fast approaching its end. When an old structure comes down its foundations shake. A Government, which allowed 30 lakhs of people to die in the great Bengal famine, cannot continue. The old order is changing, yielding place to a new one. What will happen nobody knows.

Today the country has to find solution for great questions. Take for instance, the question of demobilisation. Lakhs and lakhs of Indian soldiers will be demobilised.<sup>2</sup> Where will they go? Who will provide for them? The present administration will not be able to solve this problem.

You must realise that the country today stands on the verge of great changes. There is no doubt that the year 1946 is going to be very important for us. Swaraj is not our main problem. It is bound to come sooner than many people imagine. One of the problems about which everyone should seriously think is how after the attainment of swaraj we are going to build a new social and economic structure in which there will not be unemployment, want of food and exploitation of the masses. We must seriously ponder over the question as to how we can properly feed, clothe and house the forty crores of people—Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and others—inhabiting this great land.

The Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Communist Party are not in a position to deliver the goods. It is the Congress alone, of all the political organisations in India, that can fight the British Government and fight effectively.

We want a united democratic government of the people. We want a people's raj. We do not want to provide only for a handful of people who live in towns. So long as the villagers cannot be raised from their present condition, India cannot be raised up. I believe that it is possible

2. The releases from 1 October 1945 to the end of January 1946 from the Indian armed services totalled more than 300,000 and represented 34.4 per cent of the total of 850,000 releases for the period between 1 October 1945 and 31 May 1946.

to provide the necessities of life for the 40 crores of people fairly rapidly when we attain independence.

The Congress has been fighting for swaraj for the last 60 years. Its doors are open to all, irrespective of caste or creed. The Congress is a big democratic organisation, a panchayat of the Indian people. It has maintained its strength though it had to fight the Government several times. Whatever strength you see with the people today has grown out of the struggle of the Congress.

I have been in the Congress for the last 30 years. Its decisions might not, on occasion, be to my liking or to some people. But a democratic organisation cannot function if the people do not abide by its discipline. It is therefore necessary that we should work unitedly. In Bengal it appears to me that the Congress is not well organised. When I came here I heard the names of so many groups and parties within the party that I simply felt bewildered. This does not help us to build up the strength of our organisation. Unless we have a united and strong organisation we cannot hope to fight our enemy. If every group fights the enemy separately, it is likely that all groups will suffer defeat.

The source of strength for the Congress is the people. Unless you move and act in a united and disciplined way you cannot hope to fight the British Government.

A great fire is raging today in the hearts of all Indians. There is also the spirit of strength and enthusiasm of the people, which might dry up because of indiscipline.

I would ask you to consider how, apart from an ethical point of view, violence could further the cause of the country. Some people say that violence will bring revolution. But what is revolutionary today might be considered counter-revolutionary tomorrow. Violence, if it is to succeed, can succeed only if it is undertaken in an organised way. Even so, organised violence might have to yield before greater organised violence in the modern world. This is not difficult to understand in the atomic age. A school boy can succeed in preparing a bomb in a school laboratory. But of what avail would that bomb be before an atom bomb which can destroy a whole city?

The Congress has always stood for an open movement. It has asked the people not to be afraid. Sporadic violence has no value. Some people might go underground but millions of people cannot go underground. The Congress has, therefore, always been for an open fight. The point here is how can we strengthen the people and how can we raise the *kisans* and *mazdoors*?

The year 1946 will be a year of great decisions for India. Disciplined

and united we should prepare for this. And it is only the Congress which can face the challenge. No other organisation, good or bad, can face it. The Muslim League is talking of Pakistan. But what has it done even for Pakistan? Its leadership consists of nawabs, *khan bahadurs* and *khan sahebs*. It sometimes even gives a threat to the Government, but it has not the guts to fight the Government. The Muslim League does not even talk of independence. It wants the British to stay here and oblige it. And as far as the Communist Party is concerned, it is a great *tamasha*. It is not a revolutionary party. It has nothing to do with revolution. It claims to be a Communist Party, but it has nothing to do with communism. If it has got anything to do it is with the Muslim League, which is a reactionary party. It wants six or seven constituent assemblies for 16 or 17 Pakistans. If anybody wants to vivisect the country, it means that he wants to weaken the country. I fail to see what connection there is between communism and Pakistan.

Electioneering is a minor item in my programme, though elections have their temporary importance. The voice of the people is expressed through elections. The elections will show how many people want independence. It is for these reasons that I would like to ask you to vote for the Congress in the elections.

## 7. Why Congress?<sup>1</sup>

We have reached the door of swaraj. But the door is still closed and has to be opened. Within a few days the elections will be held and you all must vote for the Congress candidate.

Swaraj, according to the Congress conception, does not mean a mere change of rulers, but freedom for the 40 crores of people and betterment of their living conditions. Bengal lost 30 lakhs of people during the last famine which was caused by the incompetence and wilful neglect of the Government. Corruption is rampant in the country and the present form of government, whether managed by Hindus or Muslims, is faulty. It has enabled unscrupulous profiteers and bribe-takers to make money. Therefore the door to swaraj must be opened by all means.

The Muslim League is demanding Pakistan and the Communist Party and the Hindu Mahasabha are making their own demands. But the

1. Speech at Chittagong, 10 March 1946. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 12 March 1946.

Congress is demanding freedom for all. The Communists and the Hindu Mahasabha are quarrelling with the Congress and are trying to make it weaker. However, I would say that the Government and the Congress are the two powerful parties in the country today. The Communists are supporting the Pakistan demand which means vivisection of the country. I deplore it. The Communists espouse socialism. Personally, I hope that one day it will come to stay in India. But the methods adopted by the Communists are a discredit to socialism.

You must all support the Congress nominee, Mrs. Nellie Sen Gupta. I have heard about the Communist candidate, Mrs. Kalpana Dutta.<sup>2</sup> I have no quarrel with her, but her party is seriously injuring the country's cause.

2. (b. 1914); joined Hindusthan Republican Army, 1931; arrested for national activities, 1935, 1939; joined the Communist Party of India, 1940; married to P.C. Joshi, 1943; contested and lost the election for the Legislative Assembly, 1946.

## 8. The Passing of the Raj<sup>1</sup>

A 150-year-old tree once uprooted cannot be re-planted, nor can it draw succour from the soil even if put back. Today foreign rule stands uprooted from the soil of India. It can no more strike roots of resettlement.

The country is in the midst of a convulsive movement. It is faced with questions of tremendous implications. The old regime is nearing its end and a new one is in sight. But the difficult phase is the transitional period. What should be the type of national government will, no doubt, rest with the people to decide, but, in the meantime, the gap to be made up is to be reduced. A thorough change is necessary. But the vacuum that will be left by the British has to be filled. Though the old order is fast dying, a new order is yet to be born in its place. This is the time when we should act with unity and discipline of an army and not fritter away our strength in sporadic actions.

The swaraj, which India will win, will be of no avail if it is to be a mere transfer of power from British to Indian hands. Swaraj means

1. Speech at a workers' rally, Titagarh, 10 March 1946. Based on reports from *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 March and *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 March 1946.

the rule of the masses, a rule in which the 40 crores of people — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and others — will get equal opportunities in life and will be fully provided with the necessities of life. Everyone of us will get enough food and education, shelter and medicine and all the necessities of life. There will be no exploitation in the new India. We must realise that so long as the machine of exploitation is there, workers will suffer, whether the Government is British or Indian.

Since my coming out of jail I have been touring the whole country for the last seven or eight months. I have seen the fire that is burning in the hearts of the 400 million people. It is our duty to direct this fire to the right purpose and in the right direction; otherwise the fire will end in smoke.

I am sure that the fire that is burning within us will be able to lead us to our coveted goal of freedom, but for that we must forget all quarrels, organise ourselves and act unitedly.

The problem of the workers is betterment of their condition and the problem of the peasants is abolition of the zamindari system. I do not know how the question of religion crops up in so far as these problems of the workers and peasants are concerned.

Before lending your support to any of the organisations, the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha, the Communist Party or any other party, you must consider which of these bodies is best organised and strong enough to fight for swaraj, which will be a real raj of the people.

There might be some good people in the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha or the Communist Party, but they do not have the strength for the crusading task of winning freedom.

I fail to understand how religion can figure in the fight for freedom. The Muslim League says that if the Congress wins the election, Islam will be in danger. Evidently it has no ardent desire for freedom as it prefers Pakistan to freedom. The Hindu Mahasabha is up with the cry of *sanatan dharma*. It says that if the Congress wins in the election Hindu religion will be in danger.

In fact, they all create divisions and factions among us. The advocates of Pakistan want division first, and freedom next. But they do not think that it is impossible for small states to stand, without help, the onslaughts of foreign aggression. They are taking a risk. They will learn a lesson ultimately. They will be compelled to reunite what they have broken. It will be like tearing apart the limbs of a body and stitching them together afterwards.

The Congress is the only organisation which has the strength to fight the British Government. Its message has inspired everyone, from the



land of the Pathans down to Rameshwaram, the southern most part of the vast country. Its door is open to everybody and the branches of the Congress are to be found in every corner of the country.

The Government is afraid of the Congress hold on the people. So it wants any organisation but the Congress to win in the elections. It is the duty of every Indian to add to the strength of the Congress and thus pave the way for swaraj.

I understand that the Communists too want freedom, but unfortunately, they have forsaken the straight path. In their support for the Muslim League they are out to create 16 or 17 Pakistans in India.

Meanwhile, the Congress has stated that if the Muslims wish to have Pakistan, it will not deny it to them. But the view of the League that independence should be deferred till Pakistan is gained is incomprehensible to me. It is a matter of regret that there are Indians who want Pakistan before independence. If the country is divided into Pakistan, Hindustan and other small 'stans', they will all be weakened.

In the present world situation, small nations cannot retain their independence. The protagonists of the demand for Pakistan have said that they will retain their independent status with the help of the British army. What will freedom mean if a British army remains to safeguard their rights as it is today?

India is a great country and in the course of the next 10 or 15 years it will be still greater. I appeal to you to vote for the Congress, because it aims at the abolition of the zamindari system and the vesting of the ownership of factories with the workers. Support and strengthen the Congress, because then alone will it be possible for the Congress to fight the British Government as it has done in the past.

The year 1946 will be a momentous year for India. In the course of the next few months great changes are going to take place which will involve every Indian. The times are changing fast and the country is changing too. You must be on the alert and in a state of preparedness.

A Cabinet Mission is coming to India. I am sure that the present Government is going to cease and a people's raj will take over. For the establishment of this raj all of us should try to organise and strengthen the greatest organisation, the Congress.

It is a matter of pleasure that in the labour constituencies we have a joint electorate. There are no artificial barriers to separate the Hindus and the Muslims. For the last 1,000 years Hindus and Muslims have been living together in India. They must live and work together in the future. If India is independent the fruits thereof will be reaped by both the communities.

## 9. Pakistan the Reverse of Self-determination<sup>1</sup>

The Congress proposals as contained in the recent resolutions, and in particular in the election manifesto, are such as to give 95 per cent self-determination to the constituent units in the federation. We have said that we want willing partners in the federation and that the common subjects for such units would be very minimum in number such as defence and foreign affairs. There would be a list of common subjects which the constituent units might, or might not, accept as they wish.

This gives the fullest freedom subject only to the vital question of defence and allied subjects which cannot be ignored in any context. Weak defence means instability, insecurity and reliance on external powers. In that case there will be no freedom for India or any part of it. The Congress has gone to the farthest limit in accepting the principle of self-determination, and it gives a real sensation of freedom to the constituent units of the proposed Indian federation. Further, it has said that it does not wish to compel any part against its will, provided no compulsion is exercised on others against their will.

Mr. Jinnah's scheme of Pakistan, apart from its other features, is the very reverse of self-determination, because it envisages compulsion for large areas in the Punjab, in Bengal, in Assam, in Delhi, not to mention the whole of the North West Frontier Province. The Congress proposal does not involve compulsion. It gives the greatest freedom to provinces or units of the federation and yet preserves unity in defence and allied subjects, like foreign affairs, communication and currency. For the rest, the units can choose whether they will have common subjects or not. This, I say, gives 95 per cent of self-determination and freedom to the units as well as a joint working of the remaining five per cent.

**Question:** It is reported that the British and Indian troops are being withdrawn from Indonesia.<sup>2</sup>

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** The only comment I have to make is that the troops should have been withdrawn long ago.

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 March 1946. *National Herald*, 12 March 1946.
2. On 28 February 1946, the Commander-in-Chief said that Indian troops in Indonesia would be withdrawn in five months starting from March 1946.

3

## VISIT TO MALAYA



1. To N. Raghavan<sup>1</sup>

January 26, 1946

My dear Raghavan,

I was very glad to learn of your release and I am sure that this will make a difference to the position of Indians in Malaya. I am taking this opportunity of sending these few lines to you as S.K. Das<sup>2</sup> will soon be going to Singapore.

Probably you know that for the last two months I have been trying to get a passport and travel facilities to visit Malaya. I am anxious to go there even for a brief period and even though this will seriously interfere with heavy engagements here. I feel, however, that the claims of Indians in Malaya are far more important at present than my engagements here. So far I have had no final reply from Government. I am told that the matter has been referred to the Malayan administration. The moment I receive my passport and travel facilities are accorded to me, I shall proceed to Malaya, probably *via* Burma where I might spend a few days. I suppose about ten days in Malaya would suffice. I shall come by air of course as I cannot afford the time to go by sea. All this of course depends on facilities available.

You must know also that the Congress has organised a Medical Mission which has been ready to go to Malaya as soon as permission is given. I imagine that this permission will be forthcoming after a while.

It seems to me important that Indians in Malaya should organise themselves into a committee to help themselves. Individuals cannot do much by themselves. A committee immediately becomes representative to some extent and can speak on behalf of the community. It also produces a sense of cohesion and thus changes the situation psychologically. Such a committee should look after the defence of people who are being proceeded against as well as give relief to those who stand in need of it. Naturally we shall try to help you in both matters and your committee should deal directly with I.N.A. Relief and Inquiry Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi, of which Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is Chairman and Shri Sri Prakasa, M.L.A. (Central), is the General Secretary. P.K. Sehgal is the Joint Secretary. It is possible that it may not be easy for your committee or you to communicate with us here owing to censorship difficulties. Anyway you should try and approach the Government formally.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. Major S.K. Das of the I.N.A.; he had come to India from Singapore to give evidence before the I.N.A. court martial trying Captain Abdur Rashid.

on the subject, as we have done at this end. It is important that we should have full facts and figures about the situation in Malaya for publicity here. If you can arrange to have this sent it will be useful and helpful to you.

The situation in India is a very fluid one. This has its advantages and disadvantages. For the moment the disadvantages are more obvious. But in the course of the next five or six months the advantages might well prevail. Our countrymen in Malaya are faced with great difficulties. Nevertheless there is absolutely no reason why they should allow themselves to be overcome by these difficulties. We must produce a background of self-help and hopefulness.

Your son came to see me some time ago.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. To S.C. Goho<sup>1</sup>

January 26, 1946

My dear Goho,

Just before I had heard of your arrest I wrote a letter<sup>2</sup> to you. This must have reached Malaya some days after your arrest. I do not know if you got it in the end. I am now sending these few lines through S.K. Das who is returning to Malaya soon. I want you to realise that we are all very much interested in your case as well as that of other Indians in Malaya and we want to help in every way we can. But thus far it is not open to us to do much. I am myself waiting for permission from Government to go to Malaya and the moment I get it I shall proceed there. Our Medical Mission is also ready to proceed to Malaya as soon as it is allowed to do so. Meanwhile Indians in Malaya should hold together and, as I suggested in my previous letter to you, form a committee both for defence and relief. This committee should put itself in touch with the I.N.A. Defence and Inquiry Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. Not available.

You must know the general line adopted by us in defence in the first I.N.A. trial in Delhi. Conditions in Malaya are obviously different from those prevailing in India and this fact has to be borne in mind. Nevertheless it is clear that no line of defence can or should be taken up in Malaya which is in any way contrary to the line adopted by us in Delhi. The Delhi case, though by no means binding on Malaya, is a precedent which might help our people there.

I hope that you will come out soon and that I shall have an opportunity to meet you in Malaya.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. To R.N. Banerjee<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 3, 1946

Dear Sir,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your letter of the 28th February on my return to Allahabad. Previously Mr. Sri Prakasa informed me by telegram and I have sent him two or three messages, which, no doubt, he has communicated to you.

The position is this. I am prepared to leave India, as suggested, on the 15th of this month for Malaya. But I am anxious that I should not be away from India when the British Cabinet Ministers arrive here. Thus I do not want my Malayan visit to clash with their arrival, and so I cannot be definite about the dates. If I go on the 15th and can return within ten days or so, say by the 26th, I might be able to get back by the time they arrive. A day or two later would not matter much but a longer interval would be undesirable. Presumably you can find out when they are likely to arrive. You could then let me know by telegram about final arrangements for my visit to Malaya.

As I have informed you through Mr. Sri Prakasa, Mr. G.P. Hutheesing of 20 Carmichael Road, Bombay, will accompany me as secretary. He

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Secretary, Commonwealth Relations Department, Delhi.

has got an ordinary passport but this has got no visa for Malaya. As you wrote to me, no passport or visa is necessary.

There is one other matter I should like to mention. Mr. Kodanda Rao,<sup>3</sup> who has recently returned from Malaya, informed me that a need for clothing, and especially for saris, was very acute among Indians in Malaya. From enquiries made in Bombay I gathered that the various mills could supply immediately, free of charge for distribution without payment, about a hundred bales. This of course could only be done if Government gave an export permit as well as facilities for despatch to Malaya. Presumably the normal controls would not apply as this cloth would not be for sale. If you could arrange with the various Governmental authorities for permission to be granted, I could immediately issue an appeal to the various mills for this cloth.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. P. Kodanda Rao (1896-1975); joined Servants of India Society, 1922; editor of the *Servant of India* for many years; author of *East versus West*, *A Denial of Contrast* and a biography of Srinivasa Sastri; he had visited Malaya as a member of an official delegation to enquire into the conditions of Indians there.

#### 4. To Sri Prakasa<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 March 1946

My dear Prakasa,

As I have telegraphed to you, I have finally decided to go to Malaya starting from Delhi on the 15th or 16th. I shall let you know the exact date soon. I shall try to reach Delhi a day before I leave. It is understood that my visit will be a short one and that I shall be back within ten days or so.

I want to know how and in what form I can take money with me. I do not want to take any large sums but obviously I must carry some cash and have some draft on a bank in Singapore. I suggest that I take the equivalent of Rs. 500 with me and a draft of Rs. 2000 on Singapore.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



For this I presume Government permission will be necessary. I shall be grateful if you will arrange for this. I can give you a cheque when I meet you in Delhi.

I do not quite understand the nature of the arrangements made for my travelling or stay in Malaya. Naturally I am prepared to pay for any expenses incurred on my behalf. In Malaya arrangements for my stay and moving about will naturally be in the hands of my Indian friends there with whom I shall be communicating.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

## 5. To N. Raghavan<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 4, 1946

My dear Raghavan,

Your letter of the 24th February. I am very anxious to go to Malaya even for a brief period. But the situation in India is such that it is extraordinarily difficult to leave the country. As you know, British Cabinet Ministers are coming here soon and naturally I want to be here then. After much thought I have decided to go to Malaya for a week, arriving at Singapore on the 16th or 17th.

Government have informed me that they have arranged for my air journey. I have not definitely decided about the exact date of departure but it will either be the 15th or 16th from Delhi. I shall be accompanied by G.P. Huthcesing who will function as my secretary.

I am told that soon after my arrival in Singapore, Lord Mountbatten desires to see me. I shall of course meet him. I want, however, the arrangements for my stay as well as my programme in Malaya to be fixed up by you and other friends. Naturally I cannot do much within a week and I cannot stay longer. It is for you people to decide how best I should spend this week. I hope that I might be able to make a longer visit at a later stage. This present visit is only intended to meet our old friends and to discuss various matters and to cheer them up. Big changes

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

are coming in India and elsewhere and we must see everything in proper perspective and in the right context.

I want to make it perfectly clear that my stay and programme in Malaya should be in Indian hands. *Jai Hind.*

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 6. Problems of Indians in South East Asia<sup>1</sup>

While I am going only to Malaya, we are at present concerned with Indians in trouble in a big part of South East Asia. A short while ago I got a cable from Borneo that a prominent Indian named Puran Singh<sup>2</sup> had been sentenced by a court martial, I presume, to seven years' imprisonment. The charge against him might be membership of the Indian Independence League or some such thing; no other offence was mentioned. We have also had plenty of complaints from the Andamans and from Bangkok about cases being started against Indians.

In addition to the political trouble in Malaya involving the I.N.A. and Independence League personnel, there is the very big economic problem — lack of food and clothing.

About a month ago I heard that Indian women in Malaya had been reduced, in many cases, to wearing tattered gunny bags. Millowners in Bombay have offered a gift of one hundred bales of saris, but the question of granting export licences and transport facilities for despatching these bales to Malaya is still pending.

I am told that a large number of Indians in Malaya, running into many thousands, are being pushed back into India. If this is so, I doubt the wisdom of such a move. If, for instance, 20,000 Indians are sent to Madras, it will worsen the bad food situation in that province.

I have asked Malayan Indian leaders to organise public meetings so that I can meet the Indian masses.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 16 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 17 March 1946.
2. Before joining the I.N.A., Puran Singh was a jamadar in the Gurkha Rifles. He was charged with attempted murder of Gurkha prisoners of war.

## 7. Appeal for Clothes for Malaya<sup>1</sup>

The need for clothing in Malaya is very great. Indian women are said to be using gunny bags to wrap themselves up. A number of millowners in Bombay have offered to supply bales free for distribution among Indians in Malaya. I asked the Government for a permit and for despatch facilities and it has agreed to give them. It is more convenient to despatch them from Calcutta. I hope owners of textile mills round about Calcutta will also contribute cloth, and especially saris, for use in Malaya. These can then be despatched very soon there. The need is urgent. Dr. B.C. Roy has kindly agreed to arrange this.

1. This statement was issued by Jawaharlal before he left for Singapore on 17 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 19 March 1946.

## 8. Broadcast on Arrival in Singapore<sup>1</sup>

I am very happy to be here. I was here nine years ago and I have been trying to come here for some time. Now that I am here I am sorry I can stay only for a few days. I hope my visit will be of help to my countrymen, and also to other Asian people who must pull together for the good of all.

1. On his arrival in Singapore Jawaharlal gave this broadcast over All India Radio and Singapore Radio, 18 March 1946. From *India Daily Mail*, 19 March 1946.

## 9. The Unity of Asian Peoples<sup>1</sup>

I should like to thank the people of Singapore for the warm and hearty welcome they have given me although, by arriving late, I put them to the trouble of waiting for many hours.

1. Speech on arrival at Singapore, 18 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Straits Times*, 19 March and *Malaya Tribune*, 19 March 1946.

I have come at the call of the Indians here, but Singapore has attracted me for long as a great cosmopolitan city, where the various peoples of Asia are represented.

Apart from the Malaysians, the Chinese people form a part of the population, and with the Chinese people we have had evergrowing bonds of friendship.

Singapore will become the centre where Asian unity can be forged. In the future, the peoples of Asia must hold together for their own good and for the good and freedom of the world.

I am looking forward to meeting the various representatives of the Chinese people, the Malaysians, the Indonesians, the Arabs and others here. I hope that my visit will help in furthering this Asian unity.

I should also like to thank the authorities here, notably Lord Louis Mountbatten, for the facilities they have kindly offered for my tour of Malaya.

## 10. India's Concern for her Children Abroad<sup>1</sup>

I am very glad to be with you after nine long years. In India events of great importance for the future of the country are either taking place or about to take place. My presence back in India is urgently needed. Yet the Indian National Congress felt that it owed a duty to the Indians abroad during their days of trial and I have come as the Congress representative to cheer them up and bring them India's message of sympathy and offer of help. India itself is beset by many grave problems. There is a hope that India's aspiration for freedom will soon be successfully realised. I have another hope that India, when free, will be able to contribute its share to unite Asia and preserve peace in the world. When that day comes, India's arms will be long enough to protect its children abroad, but till then, Indians abroad must be content with such aid as India can give. India will give willingly and unstintingly any help and safeguard to its people in foreign lands.

I advise Indians in Malaya to live in harmony with Malays, Indonesians and Chinese, who live in this country. Indians abroad must remain united and guard their rights. They must hold up their heads proudly as the people of a country with a great past and a great future.

1. Address to the people who collected near his hotel in Singapore, 18 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 19 March 1946.

## 11. Need for a Union of Asian Countries<sup>1</sup>

The gathering before me reminds me of a dream, a dream of a united Asia. I sense the return of Asia to its past glory. Nations that have vitality cannot be put down. I call for a union of Asian countries. This move is not for aggression, but for forging freedom throughout Asia.

In the history of Asia, India and China have never fought each other—a striking contrast to the warring nations of Europe. One day, every Indian's arm will be a strong arm and these arms will fight for Asian freedom.

The independence India wants is not merely for herself. You cannot have the world half-free and half-slave. If India aspires for freedom, it is for a free world, and when India is free, every ounce of its energy shall be used for the freedom of all subject countries. This is true of Indonesia, Malaya or any other country in the world.

1. Speech at Singapore, 18 March 1946. Based on reports from *Malaya Tribune*, 19 March and *The Hindu*, 20 March 1946.

## 12. Adjustment to Present Needs<sup>1</sup>

Although my visit has been a hurried one, I feel as if I have stayed here for a long time. It may be easy to see things and tell the people what to do, but each and everyone must do something for the benefit of mankind. No one can escape from this duty.

You may be depressed by the troubles caused by the Japanese occupation of this country, and by the abnormal situation that prevailed then, but all these must be overcome by a solid unity among Indians.

This unity will compel you to look after the distressed and the destitutes among the labour class and the dependents of those who passed

1. Farewell message to the Indians of Singapore, 20 March 1946. From *Indian Daily* (Singapore), 21 March 1946.

away as the result of working on the Japanese death railway. These people need all the help you can give them.

I call for a large-scale relief to the needy Indians. If anybody cares to see me at Penang I will give him a plan as to how to carry out this programme. This relief should not savour of charity, and should be given with dignity and honour.

I have seen many things here and I expect to see many more during my up-country tour. I promise that, on my return, I will give the people of India a full report of the conditions prevailing in Malaya with particular reference to Indians. I promise to give the people at home a true picture of the situation here.

I am definitely against the formation of separate organisations. You should have only one solid Indian organisation. We are in an era of great changes and we must not therefore attach much importance to religious ties and traditions. Find out the best means and methods relevant to the present time and act accordingly. Everybody can, however, take lessons from old customs and traditions, but we must adjust ourselves to the present needs.

### 13. Problems of India and Asia<sup>1</sup>

India is no longer concerned with whether Britain is willing to recognise India's independence. Independence for India is a certainty; it will come either very shortly or in two or three years. The Congress is determined to achieve independence. It will be no gift from Britain. By its sacrifice the country has earned the right to freedom. The conditions in the world now are such that freedom for India can be denied only at Britain's peril. Nor can progress in the country be held up indefinitely, because of the intransigence of one man or one party. If the British can free themselves from the state of mind that tends to look on India as if it were an estate, which they are being forced to give up, then the transition to freedom can be accomplished gracefully. The fundamental factor for success in the coming Cabinet Mission negotiations, therefore, is a clear

1. Address to press conference, Singapore, 20 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindu*, 21 March and *Indian Daily*, 21 March 1946.

recognition of Indian independence, after which, as between equals, with certain common interests, the representatives of India and Britain can proceed to negotiate the terms. The imperial mind, however much it may desire to throw off thoughts of imperialism, still tends to proceed on the assumption that it can concede only Dominion Status with a right to break away later. This is not the right frame of mind to approach the problem. Independence should first be conferred. In that position, India will have the freedom to choose its friends and associates in the world.

What India wants now is the acceptance by Britain of the fact of Indian independence, secondly, the convening of a constituent assembly to frame the constitution and thirdly, the establishment, immediately, of a popular government at the Centre, without the Viceroy's veto, until the constitution comes into force.

Question: Can you explain what you meant by asking the people to revolt in the event of a famine?<sup>2</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: I have not been correctly quoted in the press. What I meant was that people have a right to revolt against conditions that inevitably bring on them a famine. They should fight with all their strength against social and economic conditions that permit a famine to descend on them while a privileged few feast and make fortunes out of the misery and death of their own fellowmen. Unintelligent revolt for the sake of revolt will not stave off famines.

Q: What would be the Congress policy if Mr. Jinnah carries out his threat of a revolution if the Cabinet Mission does not give due consideration to the demand for Pakistan?

JN: As far as I am concerned, I have no objection to anyone calling for a revolt. I would like to see a revolution in India called by Mr. Jinnah. It is one thing to call for a revolution and another to carry out a revolution. Mr. Jinnah has many qualities, but he has never been a revolutionary nor does he possess anything out of which he can summon a revolt. What is there to revolt against? The Congress stands for the same self-determination for which Mr. Jinnah is supposed to be fighting. The Congress is prepared to agree to the greatest amount of autonomy for the federating units, reserving the minimum essential powers for the Centre. Further it does not want to compel any unit to stay in the

2. Jawaharlal said this in a speech at Bahraich on 8 February 1946. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, p. 238.

federation, if by a free and definite vote any unit decides to break away. But, at the same time, no well-defined area of a unit can be compelled to join a seceding unit against the desire of the people in that area. Mr. Jinnah is not prepared to face the logical consequences of his own demands. It is an indefinable position that Mr. Jinnah has taken up and he does not believe that if the question of secession is clearly put to vote, no clear-cut case for secession will be made out by the electorate. If any party, which has been asked to participate in a conference, refuses to do so, we will carry on without it.

Q: What is the Congress attitude to the Indian States?

JN: The Congress is prepared to admit them to the federation if they would conform to democratic standards of government prevalent in other units of the federation and also if the rulers become merely titular and constitutional heads without interfering with the democratic apparatus of the State.

I would like to urge for consideration a suggestion that the governments of Burma and Siam, through whose territories the new Burma-Siam railway runs, should pay the price for the assets they have obtained at no cost to themselves, but which took away the lives of several thousands of Indians. Tens of thousands of men, who had been killed while building that railway, have left behind them thousands of widows and orphans who need to be looked after. Funds obtained this way can be utilised to sustain them. This was the suggestion put forward some time ago by a correspondent and I strongly supported it. That is how many hundreds of women in Malaya, who lost their husbands in Siam, feel.

Q: What is your comment on the situation in China?

JN: I appeal for unity in China. I am sure unity will help China in regeneration as its progress had been arrested because its energy has been wasted in other directions. China's social and economic development will influence the countries of Asia.

A free Indian government, I have no doubt, will forge contacts with China. These contacts are even now being developed, somehow in a big way, but mainly it is of a psychological nature.

I have appealed to Indian universities to teach the Chinese language. I favour the exchange of students and professors between India and China. I expect an increase in road, rail and air traffic between these two great countries, thanks especially to the recent war developments, which have hastened the process.



**Q:** What is your attitude to the Iranian crisis?

**JN:** About ten days ago the Working Committee of the National Congress discussed the situation in Iran, Malaya, Indonesia and Indo-China. I do not like Iran being compelled to become anybody's satellite country. I do not blame any power for the conflict either.

The use of Indian troops in Indonesia is very much resented by us. India has full sympathy with the Indonesian people.

**Q:** Are you optimistic about the outcome of the Cabinet Mission to India?

**JN:** There are strong forces which are compelling England to recognise the need for granting freedom to India. Intelligent people realise that freedom cannot be held back. The possession of India is gradually ceasing to be of gain. It is becoming a burden. As freedom is going to come, farsighted people would like it to come in a smooth way. Therefore, there is a tendency to resist any development that might create rancour.

This attitude will help something satisfactory to emerge from the forthcoming Cabinet Mission talks. At the same time, there are two other problems — the feeling of the people of Britain that they possess India as though it were a landlord's estate, and the inertia of the administration in India towards economic issues. The administration collects money and keeps law and order, but knows nothing of what goes on in the country or what gives rise to famine.<sup>2</sup>

2. One comment Jawaharlal made on Jinnah at this press conference which did not find its way into the newspapers was: "Jinnah rather reminds me of the man who was charged with the murder of his mother and father and begged the clemency of the court on the ground that he was an orphan". This was contained in an official report on Jawaharlal's visit to Malaya. See *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 134-136.

#### **14. Indian Relief Committee<sup>1</sup>**

I am leaving G.P. Hutheesing in Malaya to make further enquiries and to consult people in regard to the relief work here. I have asked him to report to me on his return to India.

1. Statement to the press, Singapore, 20 March 1946. *Indian Daily*, 21 March 1946.

The funds that have been received by me in the shape of purses are being handed over to a board of trustees. I have asked Mr. R. Ramani<sup>2</sup> to draw up a trust deed.

I find it a little difficult in the short time at my disposal to nominate the trustees or a full committee. I shall do so after further enquiries and consultations. At the same time the work of the committee should not be delayed.

With a view to taking immediate steps for relief I have formed the following committee temporarily: Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman), N. Raghavan (Vice-Chairman), R. Ramani, J. Thivy,<sup>3</sup> Dr. Lakshmaya,<sup>4</sup> R. Jumabhoy,<sup>5</sup> Mrs. Chidambaram,<sup>6</sup> Makhanlal,<sup>7</sup> Sucha Singh,<sup>8</sup> Miss J. Thevar,<sup>9</sup> Brahmachari Kylasam.<sup>10</sup>

2. Of the Indian Independence League; he took a prominent part in relief work; later served as ambassador of Malaya at the United Nations and elsewhere.
3. John Aloysius Thivy (1904-1959); Vice-President, Indian Independence League, 1942-46; first president, Malayan Indian Congress, 1946; Indian representative in Malaya, 1947-50; Commissioner in Mauritius, 1950-51; ambassador to Syria, 1953-55; ambassador to Italy, 1955-57; ambassador to The Hague, 1957-59.
4. N.K. Lakshmaya; president of the Indian Independence League in Penang.
5. Ragabah Jumabhoy (b. 1898); founder-member, Indian Association and numerous other organizations in Malaysia; President, Indian Chamber of Commerce for 7 years.
6. Mrs. M. Chidambaram; head of the women's section of the Indian Independence League.
7. Seth Makhanlal; merchant.
8. A teacher in St. Paul's School in Scramban.
9. Janaki Thevar; second in command in the Rani Jhansi Regiment of the I.N.A.
10. Of the Ramakrishna Mission in Kuala Lumpur.

## 15. India's Destiny<sup>1</sup>

The kind of nationalism Indians believe in is of an enlightened type. If we believe in independence for India, we also believe in independence

1. Speech at Kuala Lumpur, 18 March 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 March 1946.

for other countries. In future strong ties of friendship will bring India closer to the other countries of East Asia.

Apart from sentimental and historical reasons there is the compulsion of geography. Whatever scheme of defence or strategy you may evolve, India is the pivot of the Indian Ocean area, just as India is the pivot of the British empire. India is going to be the pivot of the freedom struggle of Asia. The spirit that has enveloped India cannot be cowed down by inflicting material sufferings. We are confident of the coming of independence, and also confident of our ability to raise 400 millions of our people from poverty.

## 16. The Pivot of Asia's Freedom<sup>1</sup>

India is going to be the pivot of the structure of freedom in Asia instead of being the pivot of the structure of imperialism. Indians, Chinese and Malays have suffered from a number of ills because of imperialism, colonialism and mismanaged governments. But in India, people are not despondent. In spite of their suffering, they have developed a resolute spirit which will not allow them to bow down to any threats. India is bound to win freedom and the freedom is not for a few, but for all, a freedom in which people will not only share, but will themselves participate. We are intensely nationalistic, and our nationalism stands for the freedom of all people everywhere. The future is going to test our mettle. We will have to solve all the problems which have been bothering us so long. We have to get out of the habit of looking elsewhere for help. We are prepared to face the enormous tasks of our future, but we need discipline and earnest effort. The face of Asia has changed and is changing. We have to raise 400 million Indian people to the level equal to that of any other people of the world. They can undertake these tremendous tasks only if they become arbiters of their destiny.

I realise that enough relief is not being given to the Indians in Malaya. But this is so because India is not yet free. When India becomes an independent country, it will more effectively protect its brethren overseas. Meanwhile, however, the Congress is sending soon a fully equipped medical mission, drugs, clothing and some money. I again stress the

1. The above is a report in *The Hindu* dated 24 March 1946 giving the gist of three speeches made on 21 March 1946 at Batri Pahat, Muar and Malacca.

need for cooperation between Indians in Malaya and the Chinese and Malays. You must not do anything that will strain relations among yourselves. For if you do, you will be harming India. Malaya should be an example where Indians live peacefully with the people of different nationalities.

## 17. The Resurgence of Asia<sup>1</sup>

It is nine years since I came here. Malaya was then a peaceful country, rather cut off from world currents and hardly touched by world politics. It was a pleasant and rich country where people could easily make a living. But during the last few years Malaya has passed through many ordeals and so I think that all of you have grown mature and more experienced. Today you have to face many problems, just as we have to face ours in India, where, for years, we have been struggling for independence. Now we have come to the very door of freedom. It remains only to push the door open.

Remember, when we talk of independence, we do not think of India alone, but of an India working in close cooperation with other countries of Asia for common aims. The Malaysians naturally are eager to be on friendly terms with India. They look to the safety of their own interests and rights. If they are endangered or disregarded they will be compelled to act in self-defence. The whole of Malaya is united to meet the threat to its legitimate rights. Yet the desire for close relations between India and Malaya has been repeatedly emphasised by both the Congress and Malayan leaders.

For the last 150 years, India has been the focal point of the colonial struggle. When India attains freedom, it will be the focal centre of freedom for the subject countries. India and China are countries with ancient civilisations and culture. For thousands of years, they have had very close relations. They have never had an aggressive tendency. Here you find two great countries in peace and friendship. You will not find such an example in history. In future India and China will have much to say in world affairs.

1. Speech at Seramban in Malacca, 21 March 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 23 March and *The Hindu*, 24 March 1946.

In Malaya, people from different countries live together peacefully. When I see this, I think of the future. Asia will gradually free itself completely from colonialism and reassert its former position. We are witnessing the end of an epoch in history, the end of colonialism and imperialism. I do not know what the future would be, but I can say that nineteenth century colonialism is on its last legs.

### **18. Effete Administration and Popular Enthusiasm<sup>1</sup>**

I accuse the present Indian Government of being utterly incapable, primarily because it does not possess the support of the masses. Though no experts in economics need tell you, it is enough for me to see starving people in India and realise that something is very wrong with the economics of the Indian administration. The Bengal famine was the result of an inefficient administration, for in these modern times a famine is comparatively easier to avert than it had been centuries ago. The Government of India is still unchanged and the constitution remains the same. In fact, for the past seven years, the Government of India has become more autocratic than ever, but the people of India have gained full vitality and are full of life bubbling over with enthusiasm.

1. Speech at Kuala Lumpur, 22 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 March 1946.

### **19. The Responsibility of Indians in Malaya<sup>1</sup>**

I appeal to you to maintain and strengthen the relations of the people of Malaya, both Malays and Chinese. To the Indians, I stress the necessity of dignity of behaviour and discipline. It is the responsibility of well-placed Indians to help their countrymen who need food, clothing and money. The Congress at the moment cannot extend much help

1. Speech at Ipoh, 23 March 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 March 1946.

save in the form of a medical mission coming out soon with a small quantity of relief. All cheques and purses presented to me here will be used to meet the needs of people here.

## 20. India's Role in Asia<sup>1</sup>

We are in a new era of history. We require mutual cooperation to face the mighty problems ahead. We want peace, but not the peace of subjugation. We want peace where we can express our will.

India is a powerful factor in Asia. Whoever controls India, will have influence over Asia. Whoever helps India, helps Asia.

India has been used as a base for subjecting Asia. India is being closely watched by Egypt and Palestine, Iraq and Persia. Free India is going to wake up these countries. For example, Indonesia will be inspired by a free India to fight for liberation.

Tomorrow, I will be in India where the British Cabinet Mission is deliberating. Many problems will have to be solved. Many difficulties will have to be overcome. Many questions will have to be answered. Whatever the difficulties, problems or questions, we will tackle them with patience.

1. Address to ex-I.N.A. personnel, Alor Star, 26 March 1946. From *The Straits Times*, 27 March 1946.

## 21. First Report on his Visit to Malaya<sup>1</sup>

Confidential

Allahabad  
28 March 1946

Dear Mr. President,

In accordance with the directions of the Working Committee of the Congress I paid a brief visit to Malaya. It took me a long time to get the necessary permission from the Government of India and there were many hitches to be overcome both at this end and at the other end, i.e., South East Asia Command. Ultimately, however, permission was given

1. Given to Maulana Azad. J.N. Collection.

to me and arrangements for air travel made by the Government of India. I took with me as secretary G.P. Huthcesing.

We left Delhi on the 17th March by air and reached Singapore the next day in the afternoon. I returned yesterday leaving Penang on the 26th morning. I left Huthcesing behind to make some enquiries on my behalf. He will return about the 6th of April.

My stay in Malaya was thus a brief one lasting about eight days, but was full of activities and I gathered numerous impressions. Any full account of my visit would mean writing at considerable length. For the present I am sending you this brief account so that you and the Working Committee may be informed of the situation there.

The British Military Administration in Malaya, known as the B.M.A. and functioning under the Supreme South East Asia Commander, Lord Louis Mountbatten, gave me every facility and indeed went out of their way to help me during my visit. I believe this was largely due to Lord Louis Mountbatten's initiative. Immediately after my arrival in Singapore I was asked to see him and I did so. There were one or two items in the programme proposed for me which he did not wholly like, and he put it to me that he would be glad if they could be varied. One of these was a public function at which I was supposed to place a wreath on the memorial to dead I.N.A. soldiers. This memorial, as is well known, was destroyed by British authorities soon after the reoccupation of Singapore. Since then it has been repeatedly repaired by unknown persons and then again demolished. There have always been wreaths and flowers there. Lord Louis felt that a big function which would attract large crowds might give rise to a certain resentment among the Chinese and others.

I did not personally think that the Chinese would necessarily object, but I agreed that I would avoid a public function of that type. What I did later was to visit the place quietly and without announcement and placed some flowers there. His other point was that there should be no regular parade in uniform and badges of rank of ex-I.N.A. personnel. He had already agreed to my addressing a meeting of this personnel and this amounted to about 3,000. The difference was a minor one and practically amounted to excluding the general public from this particular meeting as also that the officers should not wear their badges of rank. They had to wear their uniforms because often enough they had no clothes to wear. I told him that as far as possible this would be kept a private function though it was impossible to prevent wholly others from coming; also that generally badges will not be worn, though in some cases if people put them on this could not be objected to. His

whole point was that the ex-I.N.A. people should not appear to function as a regular army. I agreed with this. Later on I addressed these I.N.A. people gathered together. As a matter of fact quite considerable numbers of the public also crept in. The function was an impressive one and I tried to explain to the ex-I.N.A. personnel the changed conditions in which they were functioning now as well as the policy of the Congress in regard to nonviolence. It might be added that all these people were the civilian element in the I.N.A. as all the old Indian Army men in the I.N.A. had been sent back to India.

Apart from these two matters there was no other difficulty placed before me and I readily agreed to adjust my programme slightly to avoid any misunderstanding. I did not want to do anything which might go against the wishes of the other elements in the population.

As I have said the administration helped me in every way. Although we had our own automobiles, they placed two staff cars at my disposal as well as a jeep, and an aeroplane was kept handy in case of need. Further Lord Louis detailed the Chief of Staff of the Malaya Command, Brigadier Choudhuri,<sup>2</sup> as well as a young officer, Major Sawhney, to remain with me in case of need. I was not particularly anxious to have them with me, but I agreed as otherwise it might have appeared discourteous on my part. The chief object of sending these two officers with me was to avoid any incident during the tour. The whole administration was military and it was feared by Lord Louis that some petty local official might not behave exactly as he should. Brigadier Choudhuri and Major Sawhney were in fact helpful in many ways and they did not come in the way of my programme or other activities.

Lord Louis informed me that he had issued directions that no one, including members of the Indian Army, should be stopped from coming to my meetings or visiting me personally. As a matter of fact large numbers of Indian soldiers of the regular army did attend my meetings and I had occasion to meet several groups of British and Indian officers and to answer their many questions in regard to the future of India. This gave me an additional insight into the mind of the Indian Army.

During my tour which began in Singapore I visited almost all the chief towns in Malaya from the south to the north with the exception of two or three places on the east coast. Thus I visited Johore Bahru, Malacca, Seremban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Taiping, Butterworth, Penang

2. J.N. Chaudhuri (b. 1908; commissioned in the Indian army, 1928; served in Middle East and Burma, 1939-46; Commander, police action in Hyderabad State and later Military Governor, 1948-49; Overall Commander, Goa Operations, 1961; Chief of Army Staff, 1962-66; High Commissioner to Canada, 1966-69.



and Alor Star. Everywhere I was welcomed not only by the Indian population but by the Chinese and Malaysans. The Chinese particularly played an important part in all these welcomes and gatherings. Others who took part were Indonesians, Eurasians, Ceylonese, etc. To give some idea of the universality of the welcome I might mention that in Ipoh 123 organizations joined in welcoming me. At one of my meetings one of the Sultans of the State, where I was having the meetings, attended. In another State, that of Keddah, I paid a short visit to the Sultan whom I found very interesting, and subsequently a formal Malayan feast was organized in my honour by the Sultan's brother. This was attended by people of all communities including British officers. Everywhere goodwill was expressed for India and for Indian freedom and it was emphasized that the whole of South East Asia looked up to the coming independence of India. Much interest was taken in the forthcoming negotiations with the members of the British Cabinet Mission.

I was interested and pleased to find that there was no conflict of any kind between the Indians and the Chinese or the Indians and the Malaysans. It must be remembered that the Chinese form a very considerable part of the population. Indeed they number more than the Malaysans themselves. While the Indians got on well with both the Chinese and the Malaysans, there was a sense of conflict between the Chinese and the Malaysans. Some people think that this conflict is likely to come to a head in the course of a year and there might even be big-scale trouble between them. There have already been a number of riots between these two communities. The Malaysans are largely agricultural folk, simple in their ways and habits; the Chinese on the other hand are more concentrated in the cities and dominate the business and economic situation. Many of these Chinese people have lived there for generations. They don't mix easily with the Malaysans. Owing to the recent development of the Indonesian struggle for freedom Malaysans are increasingly looking toward Indonesia with which they have very much in common, in race, language and religion. Their language is almost the same; their religion is Islam toned down to some extent with many Indian survivals and generally non-aggressive. It is interesting to find many of these Indian survivals in the Sultan's courts. These Sultans used to be called Rajas till some time back. Even now one of them is called Raja — Raja of Perlis. The Chief Minister of some Sultans is called the *mantri*. The chief wife of one of the Sultans has the title Rajpameshwari.

I was interested in finding out how the activities of the I.N.A. affected the relations of Indians with the Chinese and the Malaysans. I was assured by all three communities that this had no bad effect. This was

surprising because the Chinese, or some of them, had organized a regular resistance movement against the Japanese occupation while the I.N.A. was obviously in many ways cooperating with the Japanese. Nevertheless there was no sense of conflict between the I.N.A. and the Chinese resistance movement and they even had a number of secret contacts. The Chinese evidently realized that the I.N.A. was not so much cooperating with the Japanese as working for the freedom of India with which they sympathized. The position was undoubtedly a difficult one for all concerned, but the fact remains that it did not lead to any bad blood between the Indians and the Chinese and at present their relations are definitely good. My visit has undoubtedly led to an even greater improvement in all these inter-racial relations in Malaya. I laid great stress on this factor wherever I spoke and I especially appealed to the Indians to remember that they were in essence guests in a foreign country and that they must cultivate the goodwill of the people of that country.

It must be remembered that during the Japanese occupation the Indians were more of a favoured community than any other except, of course, the Japanese themselves. This could easily have led to conflict and ill-feeling. The fact that it did not result in this is surprising and gratifying, but undoubtedly it led to bitterness among the Europeans and especially English people. These English people, some army men but mostly planters and others, were Japanese prisoners or internees and they were treated very badly by the Japanese. There appeared to have been some cases of real torture in order to extract information. They were made to work hard on public works like roads etc., and generally they were degraded in many ways. One significant fact that was brought to my notice was the general and the very marked decline of the morale of these British prisoners and internees. Many of them broke up completely and behaved in a manner which is distressing to think of. People working on the roads would bow down and *salam* everybody passing and beg for favours. Generally they behave in a very slavish way. Many of these persons are now officials of the B.M.A. and it is natural that they should feel vengeful not only against the Japanese but also to some extent against Indians who held superior positions in those days.

Probably this feeling will be toned down gradually because of the pressure of events. Already a marked improvement has been noticeable. From the 1st of April the Military Administration is giving way to the civil administration, but more or less the same people are going to continue in a new garb i.e., the old British civilians or planters. Many Indians thought that this change will not be too good for them. They prefer the soldiers at the top to the old civilians and planters. More

especially Lord Louis Mountbatten was looked upon as a person who could function in a fairly generous way.

The object of my visit to Malaya was especially to find out about the ex-I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League people as well as to investigate, in so far as I could, the general conditions and living standards of the Indian workers. At my very first meeting with Lord Louis Mountbatten he told me that he was following the policy laid down in Delhi in regard to I.N.A. — i.e., he was not going to proceed against anyone for collaboration alone with the Japanese. Only in cases of cruelty and the like would cases be started. This meant that practically speaking all those in prison still would be discharged. There might be just a few cases involving cruelty. This cruelty in the case of Indians was incidental. That is to say the real people concerned were the Japanese officials, but some Indians were supposed to have given them information or to have otherwise assisted.

About two months back the Government of India sent a number of Indian lawyers to defend Indians accused of collaboration with the enemy in Malaya. Messrs. Bhashyam, K.F. Nariman and P.N. Sapr<sup>3</sup> with two junior lawyers were sent to Malaya for this purpose from India. As a matter of fact these lawyers have had practically no work to do because there have been no cases of collaboration, and they are all coming back soon to India. I do not think there is going to be much trouble about further legal proceedings against Indians in Malaya. One peculiar aspect with some of these proceedings was this: some Indians have been or are being proceeded against for cruelty etc. The Indian community generally objects to any public defence being organized for them as they are looked upon as people who in a sense played false even to the Indian cause during the Japanese occupation. So they have no sympathy for them.

One other matter to which Lord Louis referred in his conversation with me was the tracing of the funds of the Indian Independence League or the Provisional Government of Azad Hind. About this I shall write later.

Apart from my initial interview with Lord Louis Mountbatten I met him again the same evening at dinner at his place when we had further talks about various matters. These talks were more or less satisfactory so far as I was concerned.

3. Prakash Narain Sapr<sup>3</sup> (1894-1969); member, Council of States, 1934-47; Judge, Allahabad High Court, 1947-54; member, Rajya Sabha, 1956-1962.

My dominant sensation during this visit to Malaya was one of exuberant vitality of the people there. Nine years ago I went to Malaya and found it politically speaking a placid place with practically no public life. The Malaysians were rather backward and undeveloped, the Chinese and the Indians on the whole kept away from politics. The country was rich and fertile and it was easy to make a living or to prosper in business. The taxes were light. Even in the days of the great depression of the early thirties Malaya produced surplus budgets chiefly because of tin and rubber. Indeed it went so far as to make voluntary contributions of large sums to the British exchequer. Now all this was changed. Malaya has not suffered so much from the war so far as destruction of buildings is concerned or war casualties, but of course the life of the people has been completely upset and they have gone through a very difficult and harrowing experience. After the Japanese surrender Japanese currency became worthless and this hit a large number of people although even previously it had lost much of its value by inflation. I found now that the Malaysians were wide awake and afraid of the Chinese; the Chinese were very active and especially the labour movement had grown exceedingly and was largely dominated by the Chinese, usually Communists. The labour movement was a joint affair of the Chinese and the Indians though some unions were almost entirely of Indians or Chinese. So far as the Indian population is concerned generally it has changed considerably during this ordeal and it was psychologically different. There was an element of fear in the top ranks which was natural because of the changed circumstances, but even this fear was gradually disappearing; but the dominant note everywhere was one of confidence and in a sense aggression. They remembered the days when in a vague kind of way they functioned as members of a free government and they were proud of them. Even the half-clad and naked labourers held themselves up straighter than they used to. The I.N.A. and the I.I.L. had taught them discipline and everywhere groups of Indian men and women in tattered uniforms tried to function as disciplined soldiers and indeed functioned fairly satisfactorily. There were also the *Balsena*<sup>4</sup> and the *Balikasena*.<sup>5</sup> It surprised me to see these Tamil workers of the rubber plantations transformed into these military groups. It surprised me still more to see the new spirit among the timid and gentle-faced Tamil women some of whom went about in uniform.

The I.N.A. national anthem was heard everywhere and at every function. If there was a labour union it would probably begin its proceed-

4. Boys' brigade.

5. Girls' brigade.

ings with the Chinese national song and the I.N.A. song. The Indian national flag was very much in evidence everywhere and *Jai Hind* was a universal greeting, sometimes even used by non-Indians to Indians. Indeed members of the regular army used it frequently and I was told they even used it to their own officers. When I visited the Pearl Hill prison in Singapore in the company of the Inspector General of Prisons and the Superintendent of the Prison, both Englishmen, all the warders of the prison greeted me loudly with *Jai Hind*. Indeed *Jai Hind* had attained a degree of popularity which was surprising and it was being used by officials and non-officials alike.

While the Indian workers had developed this spirit, in an economic sense they were very badly off. It was painful to see their lack of clothing and their general standards were terribly low; especially in Central and Northern Malaya there was a general labour strike when I was there and it had already lasted ten weeks. It is presumably still continuing. Railway workers are almost entirely Indian. Their demands or most of them appeared to me fairly reasonable. I did not actually interfere in this strike except to express general sympathy for labour and privately to put in a good word for them to the authorities. Publicly I suggested an arbitration or the appointment by the Government of some kind of conciliation board, but nothing of this kind was done so long as I was there. The Government were running the railways with the help of military personnel.

All these Indian railway workers as well as other workers were anxious to return to India if they could not get better conditions there. Indeed this desire to return to India was widespread among Indians of all classes. This was partly due to their lack of contact with India during the past six or seven years and partly to the expectation that India was going to gain her independence soon. Also they did not like the new conditions under which they had to live. During the last few years their economic condition was bad, but they had experienced a certain elation of spirit which kept them going. Now that elation was gone and they felt depressed. Everywhere I was asked to help in their repatriation. I said that in so far as we could help we would do so but we could not do much. There were shipping difficulties and the B.M.A. was not going to divert its shipping for Indian purposes. I warned them that if they came to India now they might get into greater difficulties because of famine conditions prevailing in some parts of the country, especially in Madras where most of them came from. I did not encourage them to come back in any large numbers at any rate during the next six months or so.

One major problem arising out of the days of Japanese occupation was that of the workers who had been sent to build the Burma-Siam railway. Over 100,000 workers had been sent by the Japanese and by far the greater number of these were Indians from the rubber plantations or elsewhere. They were forcibly taken and often they were not even allowed time to bid goodbye to their own people. Young men suddenly disappeared leaving no trace behind. The area where the Burma-Siam railway was being built was peculiarly unhealthy and there were no proper arrangements for medical attention. Wages were low and not always paid and work was hard. The result was that a large number, variously estimated at from 40,000 to 60,000, died. The Burma-Siam railway became a death-trap. Many of these returned only to die in the streets of their home towns. Even after the conclusion of hostilities there were large numbers still working away; they were gradually sent back. The British Military Administration opened relief camps. I visited one of these big relief camps at Jitra in the north-east of Malaya not far from the Siamese border. At the time I went there there were about 400 men, women and children, but it had accommodated several thousands at a time. The camp was well run and the man in charge, a British officer, seemed to me to be intelligent and sensitive. The chief lack was that of cloth there and elsewhere. After some stay in the camp these workers were sent back to their homes or to their estates where they worked. A number died.

Probably there will be a progressive improvement in conditions in Malaya as things go back to normal. Prices are slowly going down and cloth, food and other necessities will slowly flow in. The work in the plantations and elsewhere will begin again, but this intervening period is a hard one for the poor and the workers and unless proper relief is given some may not survive and others may suffer irreparable damage. One cannot blame the administration solely for all that is happening for it is the inevitable consequence of war. Nevertheless a policy which thinks more in terms of the worker and less in terms of the people at the top would bring better results. In any event it is clear that the workers, Indian or other, are no longer going to submit to the old conditions.

These are some of my impressions jotted down in a somewhat disjointed way. The main problems that arise are as follows :

- (1) The political aspect of the I.N.A. and the I.I.L.: As far as I could make out there will not be much prosecution or persecution and a lenient policy is going to be pursued. There may be a few cases of a minor kind. One difficulty, however, is bound to remain. The Administration will not re-engage those of its servants who have parti-



• WITH LORD MOUNTBATTEN, SINGAPORE, MARCH 1946



WITH STAFFORD CRIPPS AND MAULANA AZAD IN DELHI, APRIL 1946



cipated in I.N.A. or I.I.L. This was one of the complaints put forward before me on behalf of the Indians; but I told them that I considered it absurd for us to ask for this reinstatement. One cannot have it both ways — to fight the British authority and ask for service under them. It is possible, however, that a few of them may go back to some kind of service.

(2) The general economic condition of the Indians and especially of the workers must be improved. This means better wages to fit in with the higher cost of living as well as other amenities. This depends almost entirely on the B.M.A. or the planters, but workers can be helped by a general public support of their demands.

(3) Lack of clothing, medical supplies and food: Malaya produces very little food and it used to import most of it. The B.M.A. is trying to get food from outside as well as to grow some. Clothing is, for the moment, even more important. Again the B.M.A. is trying to get some kind of cotton cloth from outside chiefly from India. We are sending on behalf of the Congress 100 bales as a token gesture. I wish we could send more especially saris for women. Our medical mission has been hung up here waiting for transport. This must be expedited.

(4) The general question of relief in Malaya involves relief of the ex-I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel as well as of the estate workers. There were a number of relief organizations at work, but they had so far done little. There was a great deal of personal rivalry among them. Just before leaving Malaya I consulted a number of people and appointed a relief committee which should organize and supervise all relief operations among Indians with the help of existing organizations. This relief committee has not been fully constituted yet and a number of names may have to be added. At the desire of the people there I made myself the chairman of this relief committee though I was going to be an absentee chairman. It was felt that this would enable me to keep in touch with the work and might also help in dealings with the local administration. The vice-chairman and the acting chairman is N. Raghavan of Penang; the other members so far are:—

J. Thivy	Brahmachari Kylasam
Dr. Lakshmaya	Miss J. Thevar
R. Jumabhoy	Sucha Singh
Mrs. Chidambaram	Makhanlal

Probably we shall add another five or six names to this list to make it representative of various States and regions in Malaya.

I proposed to give to this committee all the monies received by me in the shape of purses in Malaya. This amounted to about \$ 85,000. In addition we might be able to get some of the monies which previously belonged to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government. It has been decided to create a trust which would control all these monies which would be utilized for relief purposes only. The trust deed is being drafted.

(5) In regard to the monies that belonged to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government some further inquiry was necessary in order to trace it. It was chiefly for this reason that I left Huthesing behind with instructions to find out and report to me. The British Security Service, of course, has carried out its own inquiries in the matter and probably gathered considerable information in regard to it. They have also seized some funds. I spoke to Lord Louis Mountbatten about this matter and suggested to him that all such funds might be handed over for relief purposes. He seemed to approve the idea, but he could not easily commit himself at that stage. I asked him for information on the subject from his officers. He promised to have this sent, but it did not reach me before I left.

It is obvious that owing to the sudden surrender of the Japanese considerable funds belonging to the Provisional Government or the I.I.L. must have been in the hands of various parties. A large sum amounting to about Rs. 3,000,000 was, I believe, seized by the British Government from the Rangoon branch of the Azad Hind Bank. Some other sums in Japanese or Indonesian currency have also been so seized by them. It must be remembered that though these sums can be counted in millions, in fact they are far smaller as these currencies have depreciated greatly. For instance a million would be under one hundred thousand. In the case of Japanese currency it has ceased to have any value, and I saw scores of Japanese currency notes in dollars lying about in the streets of Singapore. So much of the money belonging to the Provisional Government or I.I.L. has simply ceased to have any value. There was some, however, in Indian currency and some in gold and jewellery. Some gold bars were traced and were in possession of an Indian merchant in Singapore in value amounting to approximately \$ 60,000. I was told about this and the B.M.A. knew about it too and in fact had demanded it from him. He had so far refused to part with it. I spoke to Lord Louis Mountbatten about this particular gold and suggested that I might take possession of it in my name and then transfer it to the relief fund. He agreed. Before leaving Singapore I interviewed the merchant in question and he

agreed to hand them over to me. I instructed a bank to take possession. I do not yet know whether the transfer was actually effected. As soon as this is done and all legal difficulties have been removed the gold will be sold and the money incorporated into the trust fund. If it is possible for us to get hold of any other monies belonging to the I.I.L. or the Provisional Government I shall try to treat it in a similar fashion. I hope to have a full report in regard to all these monies, bullion and jewellery when Hutheesing returns to India. This would apply to the monies etc., in Malaya and would not include those in Burma or in Bangkok or Indo-China. It may be possible however to trace some of these also later.

I might add that there is considerable ill-feeling among Indians in regard to these funds and accusations against one another are being made. This is perhaps natural under the circumstances. I hope that after a full inquiry some light will be thrown on this matter. Of course it may be possible to trace all the monies.

(6) A question was frequently put to me in Malaya about the new Malayan Union which is coming into existence from the 1st April.<sup>6</sup> It affects Indians chiefly in regard to nationality as they might have to choose some time or other as to whether they continue to be Indian nationals or adopt Malayan nationality. I did not express an opinion about the scheme of Malayan Union as such as I had not studied it in any detail; in any event I did not want to enter into Malayan politics. The scheme is agitating Malaysians and Chinese alike. To the Indians I said that I had no doubt that some time or other they would have to choose their nationality in Malaya, in Burma and in Ceylon; they could not have the privileges and obligations of two nationalities at the same time; that even if they remained Indian nationals, as they had every right to do if they so chose, they should have fair dealing in Malaya and open opportunities. The choice really was an individual matter. Indians who had been born in Malaya and have sometimes lived there for generations might well choose Malayan nationality. That did not mean, of course, a break with India in the cultural sense, but it did mean a certain political status; in any event Indians must cultivate the goodwill of the other people of Malaya.

(7) My visit to Malaya has, I think, had a good effect in many ways. It has cheered up the Indian population there; it has brought the

6. The British plan for Malaysia, incorporated in the Straits Settlement Act passed in January 1946, envisaged a Malayan Union with two different administrations and Singapore as a separate colony. There was a protest in Malaya against the undemocratic character of the Act and the indefiniteness of many of its important provisions.

Malayans, the Chinese and the Indians closer together; it has probably toned down any political action that might be taken against Indians; and it may result in a slight bettering of economic conditions for Indians. It has also helped in developing a feeling of self-reliance in them and the relief committee that has been formed will help in this process. I have also suggested the formation or the revival of a strong central Indian association which would look after Indian interests in Malaya. What further help can we give them? First of all they want visits from Indian leaders. How far this is possible I do not know; but it would be desirable for some prominent Indians to go there from time to time. Many of them want to be repatriated. I think we should urge that fuller facilities be given at any rate for those who have their homes and relatives in India. They want immediate relief in the shape of clothing and medicines. We are doing something in this behalf. If we can do more it should be given especially regarding clothing. For the present no monetary contribution is necessary; but as a token of goodwill and personal interest a small sum may be sent now or later.

(8) The question of the ex-I.N.A. is in a sense related to the ex-I.N.A. in India though it must be remembered that in India we have members of the old Indian Army while in Malaya it has been the civilian element. I pointed out in Malaya that we could not keep it going as an army there or in India, and certainly not in a foreign country anyhow whatever happens in India when India is free. The I.N.A. has given good training and discipline to large numbers of our people. That is valuable and it has made them more efficient. How to utilize this for national service is a big problem here as elsewhere. The relief committee there is thinking of starting land settlements as well as cottage industries and the like. They would like the ex-I.N.A. personnel to hold together and I myself think this is desirable.

During my return journey bad weather resulted in delay and I had to spend a night in Rangoon. I sent for General Aung San<sup>7</sup> and some Indian leaders to meet me in my hotel there. Aung San came to see me and we had a long talk lasting far into the night. It was an interesting talk and I managed to get some picture from it of conditions in Burma. Aung San is undoubtedly the most popular leader in Burma

7. (1914?-1947); Commander, Burma Independence Army, 1942; President, Anti-fascist People's Freedom League, 1945-47; appointed Deputy Chairman of the Executive Council that ruled Burma in 1946, he negotiated with the British Government for independence; was premier-designate of the soon-to-be independent Government when he was assassinated along with six of his colleagues in July 1947.

today and if there was an election he would undoubtedly have a great majority behind him. It is fortunate that he has friendly feelings towards India and the Indian national movement. He attended the Ramgarh Congress. So while there is a good deal of anti-Indian feeling in Burma the leaders at the top do not encourage it and in fact take up a very reasonable attitude. Burma, like India though in a different way, is seething today with political unrest. Probably nothing will happen for some months to come, may be till the end of the year; but it is obvious that conditions cannot go on as they are. If there are elections then a new situation will arise as it has arisen in India. These elections are not likely to be held before the next winter. In any event the next year or even earlier will see big developments in Burma and if the British Government does not take the initiative in the matter there may be an upheaval there. Burma, it should be remembered, has no background of the nonviolent technique of action and any upheaval there is bound to be violent. Aung San himself wants to avoid this as far as possible and is working for peaceful ends, but the material is too inflammable.

I might mention that a number of prominent Indians in Burma are taking the initiative in forming a new organization which definitely declares that it wants no special privileges for Indians in Burma from the British Government, that it wants the friendship of the Burmese people and desires to support them in every way in their struggle for freedom. Naturally they want full opportunities for living there as full citizens whether as Burmese nationals or as Indian nationals. Apart from this they don't want any special favour more especially from a foreign authority like the British. I think this is a very good move and should be encouraged. The Indians in Burma have suffered greatly in the past because of the attitude of certain Indian vested interests there who were always craving special protection from the British as against the Burmese. It is clear that the British are not going to give such protection to Indians, and indeed cannot do so even if they wished. The future of Indians in Burma, in Malaya, and in Ceylon lies in their cooperation with the people there and in the strength of a free Indian Government behind them.

I have ventured to draw up this note for you immediately upon my return from Malaya while impressions are fresh in my mind. I think this note is far from exhaustive. I hope it will give you and the Working Committee some picture of the conditions prevailing there. Should you desire any further information which I am in a position to give I would gladly do so.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 22. Impressions of Malaya<sup>1</sup>

I spent eight days in Malaya and visited nearly all the important towns, except a few on the east coast. From Singapore I went to Johore Malacca, Seramban, Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Butterworth and Penang. This continuous touring involved a heavy strain, but I felt exhilarated by the response I found everywhere.

Nine years ago, when I visited Malaya last, I had found a warm welcome, but the country was hardly awakened politically. This time there was a complete difference and the war years had shaken up the people completely. All of them had gone through harrowing experiences and some of them had functioned in new capacities in entirely new environments. Malayans, who have been politically backward, were now wide awake and rather apprehensive of the future.

They were even more interested than others in the struggle for independence in Indonesia, for Malayans and Indonesians are very nearly akin to one another. The Chinese were well organised, and largely controlled the growing and powerful labour movement.

The Indians had a lot of experience and had been associated in some way or other with the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and in the Indian National Army. Apart from these, the sufferings involved in wartime, repeated changes of fortunes, the depreciation of money and the soaring prices of commodities had affected the life of the entire population, more especially of the poor. Indian workers were particularly hard hit by these changes. I found the curious combination of exhilaration and depression among these Indians, depression naturally due to the economic conditions leading to low wages and to the shortage of food and clothing which was in the latter case very acute.

Yet, the overriding impression upon me of the people was not one of depression, but of a new vitality and even, to some extent, of an aggressive spirit, which was not prepared to tolerate a meek submission to external events. Altogether, I found in Malaya a spirit of bubbling vitality.

It is astonishing how the tenant labourers of both the States, who had joined the I.N.A. or the I.I.L., had gained in stature and developed a certain discipline. Everywhere, I found these disciplined men and women, just as everywhere I also found semi-naked and destitute Indian

1. Address to press conference, Allahabad, 30 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 31 March 1946.

workers. The economic position of the workers will slowly improve as conditions go back to normal, and the work in plantation is renewed. Nevertheless, the gap between prices and their earnings and pay was very big and, in many events, it would take considerable time before they all got back to work. This period is a dangerous period unless very effective steps are taken to lessen the gap and for relief otherwise.

There was a big railway strike during my visit and this had already lasted seven weeks. I do not know if it has ended now. Railway workers are almost entirely Indians. Their old wages obviously had no relation with the rise in prices and there was great discontent. Something was done by the administration to raise their wages by 20 per cent or so and to give them a rise at a reasonable rate, but this was not considered nearly enough, and the strike was continued. Railways were largely run by military personnel during the strike.

The crux of the feelings of the Indian workers, both in railways and estates was that they must be repatriated to India unless their conditions were quickly improved. They felt that they could not continue to live in existing conditions with all hardships and humiliations involved. Probably, in previous years, they might have put up with all this, but the new sense of freedom and vitality and the experience had made them yearn for some change, though it was not known where that change would lead to. Also there was a widespread consciousness that India was on the verge of independence and all the Indians abroad wanted to share in that freedom that was coming.

So far as the personnel of the ex-I.N.A. is concerned, all the old Indian army personnel had been sent back to India. Only the civilian element remained. I must have come across at least 5,000 or more of the latter, usually in tattered uniform. These people were previously employed as workers or shopkeepers in Malaya. Many of them probably had no training in the army. Obviously they could not function as an organised army group. Still to some extent they felt together and there was a spirit of comradeship. Some of them had gone back to their old occupations while others still remained unemployed. Malaya is fairly thinly populated and the need for labour is great. So it is possible that nearly all of them might be absorbed in some occupation, but this will take some time and the Government's policy was not to give employment to those who had prominently figured in the I.N.A. Whether its policy will or can continue, I do not know.

This raises an important question in regard to future labour outside India. It is obvious that no Indian wanted to serve abroad in any humiliating capacity or with low wages and unsatisfactory conditions of life. It may be desirable for any Indian government to prevent all future

migration of labour, and certainly no such labour should be allowed to go abroad without the most explicit guarantees of fair treatment.

One major tragedy of the war was the building of the Burma-Siam railway by compulsory labour. The Japanese carried away, often forcibly, very large number of workers, chiefly from Malaya and most of them were Indians. Over a hundred thousand were thus employed. Labour conditions were primitive, medical arrangements were very few and the climate was malarial and bad. A very large number of them, estimated between 40,000 and 60,000, died. Those who survived were in a fearful condition. They had gradually drifted back, often dying in their villages after return. The British Military Administration had opened relief camps for them. I visited one such camp at Jitra, not far from the Siamese border. The time when I went, there were 400 destitutes, women and children included, although previously there had been several thousand. The camp appeared to me to be very well run. As soon as the workers recovered, they were sent back to their homes or to other estates.

I was especially interested in finding out the relations existing between Indians, Malaysians and Chinese. I was gratified to find that the Indians were uniformly on good terms with both the Malaysians and the Chinese. This was not only evident from joint welcomes organised for me by all the communities, including Malaysians, Indonesians, Indians, Ceylonese and Chinese, but also I found a growing cooperation in various activities, such as labour unions. I was assured by both the Chinese and Malaysians that they were getting on well with the Indians. One rather surprising feature was that during the Japanese occupation, when the Indian National Army was functioning and, at the same time, there was a Chinese resistance movement against the Japanese, there was no conflict between the I.N.A. and the Chinese resistance movement, although they were functioning in entirely different spheres, which could not be coordinated easily. Indeed, there was some kind of underground contact between the two.

This showed how the Chinese appreciated the fact that Indians were working for the freedom of India and were not anxious to cooperate with the Japanese occupation as such. My visit, I hope, will lead to even greater cooperation and harmony between Indians and the other communities in Malaya.

The immediate and urgent need of Indians in Malaya, is, apart from food, clothing and medical supplies. The British Military Administration and the Government of India have done something to give relief, but the problem is too great to be tackled effectively in a piecemeal way.

The Congress medical mission has not yet arrived there, though two of the doctors attached to the mission reached Singapore while I was in



Malaya. The rest of the mission is still held up in Calcutta for want of transport. It is urgently necessary that this mission should be sent soon.

As regards clothing, the British Military Administration had ordered large supplies of clothes, probably worth ten million dollars, from India, but they did not know when they will get it. I have just heard that Sardar Vallabhbhai, on behalf of the Congress, has despatched 100 bales of cloth, especially saris for women, from Bombay to Singapore. This is not much, but it will be very welcome there. These bales are gifts of a number of mills in Bombay and are meant for free distribution. I trust similar gifts will continue to be made by the textile mills in India so that we can supply in some measure the need of our people in Malaya, especially our womenfolk there.

There were a number of relief organisations, recently founded by Indians there. I felt that none of these was firm enough to cope effectively with the situation. Just before my return, therefore, I consulted various friends and nominated a central Indian relief committee, which could take charge of all relief work. At the request of friends there I accepted the chairmanship of this committee, though obviously I was going to be an absentee chairman. It was felt that this committee will be helpful in many ways and keep us in India in touch with the Malayan situation. The vice-chairman and the acting chairman of this committee is Mr. N. Raghavan of Penang. So far there are ten other members, but it is proposed to add to this number. I took with me Mr. G.F. Ilutheesing, as my secretary, and I have left him there for some further enquiries. On his return after a week, I hope to add fresh names to the relief committee.

During my tour, I received some purses amounting to 85,000 dollars; in addition to this probably another sum of about 60,000 dollars has been promised. It is proposed to create a trust fund of all this and other monies received for the relief of the Indians in Malaya.

Indians in Malaya, having been cut off from India completely for six years, are passionately desirous of renewing contacts with the motherland. Many of these wanted to come back, but shipping facilities are few. Everywhere I was asked to help them in repatriation. I was also asked to induce Indian leaders to visit Malaya from time to time.

In Malaya, one of the issues which is disturbing the public mind greatly is the proposed Malayan Union which, I believe, would come into existence very soon. I do not like to express any opinion about the internal Malayan politics nor indeed have I studied it closely. But inevitably Indians will have to choose in future, whether they are in Malaya, China or Ceylon, if they prefer to remain in the Indian nation or to acquire a nationality of the country they inhabit. Probably, most of them will prefer to retain Indian nationality as they are proud of India.

Those, however, who have lived in other countries all their life or for generations, might well adopt the nationality of their country. That, of course, does not mean breaking natural contacts with India. It merely leads to a different political status.

For my part, I hope that some time in future we shall develop some kind of common nationality for all these regions of South East Asia and India. But that does not relate to the present. Whatever I spoke, I laid stress on Asian unity and cooperation between different Asian countries, specially from the point of view of defence and trade and, of course, cultural matters. This applies to South East Asia as well as to the whole Indian Ocean region. My suggestions were warmly welcomed by all communities.

Indonesia lies just off Singapore and naturally the Indonesian struggle excited interest, sympathy and admiration in Malaya. There were many Indonesians there, and they were anxiously eager to have me visit Java. I told them that I could not do so in the present circumstances.

I left Malaya with regret for I had made many friends and the affectionate welcome given there had affected me. All of them had made me feel perfectly at home with them, whether they were Indians, Chinese or Malaysians.

On my return journey, due to bad weather, I had to spend a night in Rangoon. It was a short night, but I was fortunate enough to meet some Indian friends there, as well as General Aung San who came to visit me. We had an interesting talk, and I was happy to find how much in common we have in our outlook about the future. General Aung San was specially anxious to cultivate friendly relations with India. Some time back, he reminded me, he had proposed that a conference<sup>2</sup> of the representatives of the Asian countries should meet in India. I welcome this proposal warmly and I hope effect will be given to it in the not distant future. We shall gladly invite representatives from all over Asia to such a conference in India. •

General Aung San is well acquainted with the Indian political freedom movement and attended as a visitor the Ramgarh Congress session.

The overall effect of my visit to Malaya and my brief passage through Burma, have enabled me to see the Indian problem in the wider perspective of Asia and to some extent of the world, for India is obviously going to make a difference to the world situation whichever way she goes. There

2. Aung San said on 1 March 1946 that he was interested in an Asian "Potsdam" conference to formulate a joint programme for the freedom of subject countries in Asia and would shortly visit India to discuss the matter with Indian leaders.

was realisation of this everywhere. People felt that the independence of India was the key to the freedom of other Asian countries.

### 23. Second Report on Visit to Malaya<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
4 April 1946

Dear Mr. Chairman,

I went to Malaya last month and spent about eight days there. I went under the directions of the Congress Working Committee and I have already submitted a report on my visit to the Congress President.<sup>2</sup> I am sending this brief report to you in regard to matters chiefly relating to the I.N.A. and the I.I.L. personnel in Malaya.

I had occasion to meet nearly every important Indian who was out of prison in Malaya. I also met some Indian leaders and others in Pearl Hill prison and in the hospital in Singapore. I was unfortunately unable to visit Major Swamy<sup>3</sup> and a few others who were in a prison which I could not find time to visit, but I sent a friend to visit Major Swamy and he informed me that he was quite well.

There is no doubt that the conditions of the I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel were bad soon after the British reoccupation and this continued for some time. When I went there, there had already been some improvement and I imagine that my visit has led to greater improvement. I was told by Lord Louis Mountbatten that the Malayan Administration would not proceed with any case of collaboration alone with the Japanese. But in cases involving cruelty and torture proceedings would be started. I cannot say how many such cases there are going to be, but I imagine there are not many. One case that was brought to my notice was that in which the Bishop of Singapore was concerned. I was informed that the Japanese had tortured him and treated him with considerable brutality. The real offenders were the Japanese, but it was stated that some Indians were indirectly involved.

Because there have been no cases of collaboration the Indian lawyers sent by the Government of India for defence purposes, namely Bhashyam,

1. Given to Vallabhbhai Patel, Chairman, I.N.A. Enquiry and Relief Committee. J.N. Collection.
2. See *ante*, item 21.
3. Major N.G. Swamy of the I.N.A.; confidential secretary to Subhas Bose and in charge of the secret service of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

Sapru and Nariman, had really had no work to do. Bhashyam has already come back to Madras and others are likely to come back soon.

I do not know what legal developments there might be in the future, but I imagine that they will be limited in scope and affecting only a few persons. For these it should be possible to make arrangements for defence in Malaya itself.

While in Malaya I received cablegrams from Borneo and other places informing me of heavy sentences on Indians who had been associated with the I.I.L. I did not know the facts of those cases and it was not easy to find out. As Borneo and various other places in South East Asia are under the S.E.A. Command I decided to make some arrangements for dealing with them in Malaya itself at the Headquarters of S.E.A.C. I have asked Mr. R. Ramani to make inquiries regarding all such cases outside Malaya but within the S.E.A. Command and to take such other steps as may be necessary, such as pointing out that the policy in regard to collaboration which had been adopted in Delhi and Malaya should be followed elsewhere also. I informed the S.E.A. Command also of this arrangement of mine.

It should be remembered that this does not include the Andaman Islands which are directly under the Government of India and any arrangement for the Andaman Islands will have to be made separately.

Thus so far as Malaya is concerned the legal aspect is not very important. I imagine that most of the remaining I.N.A. or I.I.L. personnel will be discharged soon. Indeed some like Goho and Abid Hassan<sup>4</sup> have been discharged already.

The general political aspect has also improved greatly and any direct persecution or repression is not likely to take place. One thing will take place and that is the Administration will avoid employing men prominently connected with the I.N.A. and I.I.L. I found it difficult to urge any claims for re-employment as this somehow did not fit in with our general policy and the aggressive spirit of the I.N.A. Still I think that gradually there will be a measure of re-employment. I found many I.N.A. sepoys had already drifted back to the rubber estates. Altogether the political position is more or less satisfactory but requires vigilant care.

The economic position is certainly not good. I shall not deal here with the great difficulties being experienced by Indians generally, especially by Indian labour owing to lack of food, clothing, low wages and

4. A.H. Safrani (b. 1911); a close associate of Subhas Bose and accompanied him on his submarine voyage from Germany to Japan; joined the Indian Foreign Service, 1949; ambassador to Syria, 1963; ambassador to Senegal, 1965; ambassador to Denmark, 1965-69.

very high prices which are totally out of relation with wages. The problem in relation to I.N.A. and I.I.L. was more limited though big enough. We have to think of providing employment for them probably in some productive sphere, giving relief where needed and of repatriation to India. There was a very strong desire throughout the Indian community to get back to India. There were shipping difficulties in the way and also, I believe, a certain reluctance of the Government of India to encourage any large-scale repatriation for fear that these people might be centres of trouble for them in India. In the case of some important persons and those having families or contacts with India repatriation should certainly be urged by us, but in the case of large numbers of labourers and like folk it hardly seems desirable to encourage their return to India during the next few months owing to famine and food scarcity here. It must be remembered that most of them come from Madras where food conditions are worst. Anyway there is little chance of shipping or other facilities being offered by Government. Labour is scarce in Malaya and as the rubber estates get going the demand for labour will increase. This raises an important question as to Indian policy towards Indian labour abroad. Obviously we must sternly discourage accepting any inferior or degrading position abroad. It may even be necessary to stop all emigration.

During my brief eight days in Malaya I must have come across at least 5,000 I.N.A. personnel including the Rani of Jhansi Regiment, the *Bal-sena* and the *Balikasena*. They struck me as a fine lot of persons politically conscious and eager to do something worthwhile for their country. Naturally there is not much scope in a foreign country for them to do this. It was different in war time when the Provisional Government and the I.I.L. were functioning. The immediate problem is that they should look after themselves or be looked after and should hold together. There were a number of relief organizations working in local areas but they had little resources or influence. I decided, therefore, to form a new relief committee which would organize and supervise all relief work. This would include immediate relief, finding employment, settlement schemes and the like. At the request of friends there I accepted the chairmanship of the committee as this would facilitate their work in some respects and at the same time keep us in India in touch with them. The other members of the committee so far appointed were: N. Raghavan (Vice-Chairman & Acting Chairman), R. Ramani, J. Thivy, Dr. Lakshmaya, R. Jumabhoy, Mrs. Chidambaram, Makhanlal, Sucha, Miss J. Thevar, Brahmachari Kylasam.

More names will be added by me to this committee after I receive a further report from Huthecsing who is due back within a few days.

It is proposed to have two secretaries for the committee; for the present Brahmachari Kylasam has been appointed as one of these joint secretaries. The office of the committee will be situated at Kuala Lumpur.

The immediate activities of this committee will be:—

- (1) To contact existing I.N.A. relief committees and other Indian organizations and to find out what they are doing.
- (2) To give immediate relief where necessary.
- (3) To draw up schemes of assistance including settlement schemes; also to consider and help in repatriation where feasible.

The committee was to utilize fully all existing Indian organizations in the work for relief.

I expect this committee to get to work immediately, even before the addition of further names. As soon as I have a report from Hutheesing I shall send further instructions and nominations.

I received about 85,000 dollars in the form of purses in Malaya. I handed this over to the relief committee. In addition we got some bars of gold which belonged to the I.I.L. These too, when converted into money, will be handed over to the relief committee. Probably they will amount to \$ 60,000. Inquiries are being made about other monies or gold or jewellery in private hands which belonged to the Provisional Government or to the I.I.L. If any of these can be traced and taken possession of they will also be handed over to the relief committee.

You have already sent 100 bales of cloth for free distribution in Malaya. This work will be done by the relief committee.

I have just learned that the Congress Medical Mission has at last sailed from Calcutta for Malaya.

Our friends in Malaya were anxious that Indian leaders should visit them from time to time. How far this is possible, I do not know, but it would be desirable to send someone from time to time. Attempts should also be made, I think, to send more cloth.

Although the relief committee in Malaya has for the present enough money at its disposal, I think it would be desirable and a fitting gesture on our part to send them about \$ 10,000 for purposes of relief.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**24. Third Report on Visit to Malaya<sup>1</sup>**

Confidential

New Delhi  
16 April 1946

Dear Mr. President,

This is in continuation of the report on my visit to Malaya which I sent you on the 28th March 1946. Since then Shri Hutheesing has returned from Malaya and has given me further information about the various matters which I had entrusted to him. He has presented to me two reports; one dealing with the enquiry in regard to the funds of the Indian Independence League and the Provisional Government of Azad Hind, and another dealing with other matters chiefly the railway strike and the formation of the Central Indian Association. Many of the matters dealt with in these reports are of a confidential nature to which publicity should not be given. I am giving the originals of these reports to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. for record in his office. Should you or any member of the Working Committee desire to see them they will, of course, be available there. Hutheesing has also given me certain appendices to his reports which are also being given to the General Secretary of the A.I.C.C. I am dealing with these matters briefly below to enable you and the Working Committee to know exactly where matters stand in Malaya.

Funds:— Hutheesing carried out a careful and fairly detailed inquiry into these and interviewed practically all the persons intimately concerned with them. He also saw those who were making charges against others and where such a charge was made he tried to trace it and gave every opportunity for proof being produced. His conclusions are, and I entirely agree with them, that there is no evidence of malfeasance though there was a good deal of slackness and inefficiency at the end. It must be remembered that the state of affairs in Malaya at that time was extraordinary. The Japanese had surrendered and were retiring, the British were taking possession in a day or two. There was thus a kind of interregnum when no constituted authority existed. Even before this constituted authority had been gradually vanishing. Members of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. were placed in a very peculiar and difficult position and did not know what their fate was going to be. In such circumstances one can hardly expect normal efficiency, discipline and ordered life. Especially after the departure of Shri

1. Given to Maulana Azad. J.N. Collection.

Subhas Chandra Bose there was a tendency for every organisation to go to pieces just before the coming of the British. Shri Bose, before his departure, had directed that all funds should be used in two ways, first in giving immediate relief to the I.N.A. or I.I.L. personnel, secondly to create a trust fund for the purpose of giving relief to Indians. An attempt to do so was made. A good deal of money was distributed to the I.N.A. and I.I.L. personnel and medical supplies and other goods were distributed to charitable organisations and some kind of a provisional board of trustees was appointed to look after the funds which were placed in charge of a firm of solicitors. These funds were subsequently taken possession of by the B.M.G. I shall not go further into this matter as it is fully dealt with in Hutheesing's report. It seems to me that considering everything a considerable measure of order and discipline was observed in very trying circumstances by responsible Indians in Malaya and it is not fair to judge them by normal standards when the fortunes of war were driving out one occupying force and bringing in another. The various allegations and charges made were very vague and one is inclined to think that they were often based on personal dislikes. It is also evident that there was some conflict between those Indians who had left Malaya just before the Japanese occupation and returned after the British reoccupation and those Indians who stayed throughout in Malaya and functioned in the Provisional Government and the I.I.L. I need hardly say that it is these latter Indians who command the confidence of the great majority of the Indian population of Malaya. I might mention, however, one incident which was unfortunate and discreditable not to any prominent Indian there but rather to the rank and file. This was the looting of the Singapore Headquarters by the personnel of the I.N.A., I.I.L., and the general public, and yet one cannot attach even to this too much importance because of the extraordinary circumstances.

It appears that it is not possible to trace or recover any substantial funds other than those which are already known. Among these was the gold to which reference was made in my last report. This has at last been recovered from Sardar Hardayal Singh and has been credited to the account I opened in Singapore. Further there are some sums of money, notably 1,000,000 piastas (\$ 500,000) which was seized by the B.M.G. The B.M.G. also seized a large quantity of medical stores which had been given to the Ramkrishna Mission. There are also some blocked accounts of the I.I.L. in Japanese currency which probably have no value now.

In my previous report I mentioned that I had requested Lord Louis Mountbatten to hand over to the trust fund we were creating the monies they had seized from the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. so that these might be used for relief work among Indians.



Lord Louis Mountbatten could not commit himself to this but promised to recommend it to the civilian administration that was going to take office on the 1st of April. I have received a letter from Major General H.R. Hone, Chief of the Malaya Command, in which he tells me that full information in regard to such funds will be sent to me later. I am continuing my efforts to get these funds transferred for relief work, but I am not by any means sure that this will be done.

In conclusion I wish to say that as far as I can make out no blame attaches to the leading members of the Provisional Government of Azad Hind and the I.I.L. in regard to these funds though undoubtedly there was some inefficiency towards the end. Certain allegations were made specially against Mr. N. Raghavan, the Finance Minister of the Azad Hind Government. None of these were substantiated and indeed a document produced in support of these allegations was found by Hutheesing to be forged. Both Hutheesing and I are clearly of the opinion that Raghavan is completely free of any taint in this matter or in any other. He is undoubtedly one of the leading and most popular Indians in Malaya though he has a number of enemies especially among those who have recently returned from India. It was because I had full faith in Raghavan and his capacity that I appointed him the vice-chairman and acting chairman of the relief committee I have formed there. I might add that all the I.N.A. officers here whom I have consulted have also expressed their full faith in Raghavan.

I have received drafts of the trust deed from Ramani and Raghavan for the creation of a trust for the relief of Indians. I am considering these and shall let you know what further steps have been taken in the matter later.

**Railway Strike:** I mentioned in my last report that a railway strike chiefly involving Indian workers had been going on in Malaya for seven weeks when I was there. Soon after my departure this strike was on the point of collapsing. Hutheesing has been approached by the workers and he got in touch with the authorities also. As a result of his efforts he was successful in getting what must be considered in the circumstances very good terms for the strikers. Both parties having agreed to these terms the strike ended. I should like to say that this was a remarkable piece of work done by Hutheesing and the results he achieved were such that I could hardly have considered them possible. I myself had talks with some of the authorities there in regard to the railway strike and I had found them completely deaf to any other approach than their own. The fact that when the strike was actually collapsing they were induced to agree to relatively favourable terms for the strikers was a very creditable achievement indeed. From a message received by me subsequently from

the railway workers it is clear that they have greatly appreciated and are thankful for the part that Hutheesing took in resolving the strike to their advantage.

**Relief Committee:** The Indian Relief Committee I formed in Malaya has started its work and held a meeting in Kuala Lumpur at which Hutheesing and Prakash Narain Sapru were present and R. Ramani had been elected treasurer and J. Thivy, recently released from prison, had been appointed joint secretary. I think Thivy's choice as secretary is a very good one as he commands the confidence of most people.

I am adding five names to the relief committee. These five names are:—

Mr. O.A.R. Arunachalam Chettiar (Malacca)

Mr. S. Seenikkatti (Chulca Muslim representative from Ipoh)

Mr. Chidambaram Chettiar (East coast representative from Kunten)

Dr. Muttatambi (Johore Baru)

Mr. Swami Atmaram (Kuala Lumpur)

I am also empowering the relief committee as now constituted to add two additional names to their number if they so choose.

**Central Indian Association:** Efforts are being made, as suggested by me, to reconstitute the Central Indian Association for Malaya which might represent Indian interests there. Hutheesing took part in the meeting organised for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru'

## THE I.N.A. TRIALS



**1. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
March 4, 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I have to inform you that during my Garhwal tour I received purses amounting to about Rs. 30,000/- (to be exact Rs. 29503/4/, but this may be added to later). These were chiefly for I.N.A. relief work in Garhwal and partly for Congress work there. The money has been deposited in my name in the Bharat Bank Limited at Kotdwar in Garhwal. I suggest that this money should be credited in the I.N.A. account and then debited for Garhwal. I have made various suggestions as to how this should be utilised directly or indirectly for I.N.A. relief in Garhwal. Apart from immediate relief to those discharged and to dependants of those dead, we are trying to start some productive centres for wool spinning and weaving. Garhwal has already got 800 I.N.A. men and it is likely to have another two thousand or more soon. There is a local I.N.A. committee functioning there.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

**2. To R.F. Bahadur<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
March 5, 1946

Dear Bahadurji,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter which I received rather late as I had been touring. I am glad that you have agreed to go to Delhi for the I.N.A. cases. We do not know exactly what policy Government will pursue in this matter. It is quite possible that they might have many more

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.  
2. An advocate of Lucknow.

cases. Or they might have one or two more. In any event I shall be grateful to you if you could go to Delhi not only for an individual case but generally to supervise what is being done and help with your advice. Arrangements will be made for your stay and comfort there. Kindly inform Raghunandan Saran, 6 Metcalfe Road, Delhi, about the date and time of your arrival so that he can make the necessary arrangements.

I should have liked to meet you myself but I have to go to Malaya soon on a brief visit. I hope to be in Delhi for a few hours on the 15th March just prior to my leaving for Malaya.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 3. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

17.3.46

My dear Vallabhbhai,

This is being written in some haste as I have soon to go off to the airport.

It is probable that in three weeks or so a new I.N.A. trial may start. This is going to be an important one and important persons will be involved — General Bhonsle,<sup>2</sup> Stracey,<sup>3</sup> the Anglo-Indian, and several others including high Muslim officers. We all think special attention should be paid to this for a variety of reasons. It is also the request of the I.N.A. officers in detention still that leading Congress lawyers should be engaged for it. So we would like you to get either Setalvad<sup>4</sup> or Munshi to come for it. Some of the accused suggested Setalvad.

1. File No. 3590/II/II-2, Records of the Police Commissioner's Office, Maharashtra Government.
2. J.R. Bhonsle (1905-1963); trained at Sandhurst and commissioned in the Indian Army. During the war he was sent to Malaya and was captured by the Japanese in Singapore. While in Singapore he met Subhas Bose and joined the Indian National Army of which he became the chief. In 1946, he was taken a prisoner and tried but released. He was elected to Parliament in the first general election and was appointed Deputy Minister for Rehabilitation; later he served as Director of the National Discipline Scheme.
3. C.J. Stracey (b. 1915); joined the Indian army, 1938; served the Indian National Army as a colonel, 1942-44; executive secretary, I.N.A. Relief Committee, 1947; joined the Indian Foreign Service, 1948; served as ambassador in Madagascar and Finland before retiring in 1973.
4. M.C. Setalvad (1884-1974); Advocate-General, Bombay, 1937-42; principal representative of India for Kashmir question at the U.N. Security Council, 1952; Chairman, Law Commission, 1955-58; Attorney-General of India, 1950-62; Member, Rajya Sabha, 1966-72.

Nandan has exhausted his money for defence work. I suggest that you send him Rs. 5000/- more.

I was informed yesterday that the Government of India have agreed to issue permits for sending about 100 bales of cloth (especially saris) to Malaya. I have suggested that these be issued in your name. Could you kindly ask the Bombay or Ahmedabad mills to supply these free for free distribution to Indians in Malaya? There is some difficulty about despatching them from Bombay. It is easy to do so by Government from Calcutta or Madras. Perhaps a Scindia boat could take them to Madras and then Government will send them on. They will be sent to the Government Agent in Singapore but he will hand them over to representatives there. Probably the Government will write to you.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

#### 4. Warning Against New Trials<sup>1</sup>

On my return from Bhopal, I learnt that two new trials of I.N.A. officers are going to begin early next month. We hoped and expected that this unfortunate chapter of trials and long detention was over. Recent releases, which had long been overdue, had confirmed this hope, and now comes this news. The civil and military authorities of the Government of India function in a mysterious way. •This, I suppose, is their method of preparing India for the freedom to come. Whatever they may have in their minds, they succeed remarkably well in irritating public opinion and making a difficult situation even worse.

Obviously, if trials are held, the challenge will be accepted in every way. But all this fits in ill with the Cabinet Mission and its activities, as well as the many other declarations that have been made by the British Government.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 24 April 1946. *National Herald*, 25 April 1946.

## 5. To Claude Auchinleck<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
30 April 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I am writing to you about the proposed trials of I.N.A. officers which have been provisionally fixed for May 6th and 10th. I have been distressed about this matter. I mentioned this to a mutual friend and he suggested that I should see you about it. You must be busy and I have to go to Simla tomorrow. I do not, therefore, propose to take up any of your time, but I feel I must write to you and place before you certain considerations in regard to these trials. There is nothing new in what I am going to write to you and I have no doubt that other people have mentioned these aspects to you. Nevertheless I am venturing to mention them again.

The announcement of these trials came as a shock to most of us because we had felt that this unfortunate chapter was closing and that there would be no prolongation of it with all the consequences that this entails. Already these officers have been in prison and detention for a long time. Some of them, as you are no doubt aware, had to undergo very humiliating and painful experiences in Malaya soon after the surrender of the I.N.A. to the British authorities. When you took the action that you did in regard to the first I.N.A. trial, the wisdom of that action was very much appreciated and it was felt that there would be no going back upon it in any way. Gradually, it was hoped that this episode would become history and normality would return. It is obvious that if these fresh trials of prominent officers of the I.N.A. take place there would be a great deal of public interest in these occurrences and the whole story would be revived. Probably the treatment which some of these I.N.A. officers suffered after their surrender would also come out. The result of all this will not be desirable from any point of view for it will create public excitement when no one desires a revival of such excitement on this issue.

I have gone through the papers in connection with these trials and I give my opinion for what it is worth. I feel that there is no real case and certain occurrences have been grossly exaggerated. The charges made are denied by the parties concerned. In the special circumstances then prevailing it is difficult to be certain of what exactly took place and it is still more difficult to judge from normal standards. Such a

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



case would probably not be started on the merits alone. Much less I would venture to say it is desirable to start it at present.

There are many other considerations, but I shall not trouble you with them. I trust that you will reconsider this matter and come to the conclusion that I have suggested.

There are at present a number of I.N.A. officers who come from Indian States, notably from Kapurthala and Bahawalpur. While others have been released, these officers are still detained. I do not know what special reasons apply to these officers from the Indian States and why they should be treated differently. You suggested at one time that all releases would be effected by the first of May. Today is the last day of April. I was hoping that we could start with a clean sheet from tomorrow.

You will excuse me for writing this letter to you, but I felt that I should make this appeal to you and I was encouraged in doing this by the suggestion of the mutual friend mentioned above.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In his reply dated 3 May 1946 General Auchinleck denied that differential treatment had been accorded to officers of the Indian States Forces. He assured Jawaharlal that all I.N.A. prisoners would be released by 15 May 1946.

## 6. To Raghunandan Saran<sup>1</sup>

Personal and confidential

Simla  
May 2, 1946

My dear Nandan,

I have just learned that the new I.N.A. trials are not going to take place.<sup>2</sup> Probably the Commander-in-Chief will issue some statement or orders for the withdrawal of these cases. So far so good. That, I take it, ends the chapter of I.N.A. trials. Munshi and Ali Zahcer,<sup>3</sup> if they have come, can now go back.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. On 2 May 1946, the Government announced that no more men of the I.N.A. would be tried.
3. Syed Ali Zaheer (b. 1896); member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1930-37; left the Muslim League in 1937 and organised the Shia community; President, All India Shia Political Conference, 1941, 1945; Member, Interim Government, September-October 1946; ambassador to Iran, 1947-51; Minister, U.P. Cabinet, 1951, 1952-60, 1963-67; author of *The Dead Past*.

There is one thing I should particularly like you to bear in mind. I do not want any publicity to be given to the fact that I wrote to the Commander-in-Chief. I am afraid my letter<sup>4</sup> was seen by a few persons and is probably in some file of the I.N.A. office. I do not mind it remaining in some confidential file there but perhaps it will be better to take it out altogether. Those who have seen this letter should be told not to talk about it. My point is that it would be rather ungracious for anyone to say that as a result of my writing to the Commander-in-Chief certain action followed. So I particularly do not want this to be said anywhere by anyone and more especially not in the press or to pressmen. When the fact is known publicly that the trials have been withdrawn we should briefly express our appreciation of the Commander-in-Chief's action. We need not go into any details or motives.

I am staying here with the Maulana at the "Retreat". Our telephone number is 793. The house is a big one and centrally situated and near the Cecil Hotel. I expect that Mrs. Naidu and Padmaja will also stay here, also Chand.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

4. See the preceding item.

## 7. To Claude Auchinleck<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
4 May, 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I want to thank you for your decision to withdraw all trials of I.N.A. personnel. I am sure this decision will be widely welcomed and will help in producing an atmosphere which we all desire.

It has been said sometimes that the regular Indian army has been largely ignored while the members of the I.N.A. have been lionised. To some extent this may be true, but I do not think it is fundamentally true. All Indians are proud of the courage and capacity of the Indian army. They are splendid material, but inevitably they have been looked

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Also printed in *Auchinleck* (London, 1959), pp. 817-819, by John Connell.

upon in the past as agents of foreign authority and so long as political conditions in India do not change completely, this approach will remain. As a matter of fact various factors during the past few months have gone towards breaking down, or at any rate lessening, the barriers between the army and the civil population. This is all to the good. Nevertheless the final barrier will remain till the army can consider itself, and is in fact, a real national army. I hope the day is not distant when this will happen. You must know that most of us have friends and relatives in the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and so, apart from wider national considerations, even personal factors make us interested in the future of the defence services.

We know that large numbers of officers and men of the Indian army, who were taken prisoners by the Japanese in Malaya, suffered terribly.<sup>2</sup> Thousands did not survive this ordeal. Those who underwent this suffering certainly deserve our full sympathy. We know also that every person who joined the I.N.A. did not necessarily do so for patriotic motives, but, having personally come across a fairly large number of I.N.A. officers and men, I must say that I have been struck by the high calibre of many of them. I have no doubt that the basic motive for many of them was patriotic and the desire to help in achieving India's freedom.

It is sometimes said that we have exploited this I.N.A. situation for political purposes. Almost everything in India fits in somewhere into the political picture because the fact of India's subjection dominates life here. But I can say with some confidence that there was no desire or even thought of exploiting the I.N.A. issue for political purposes when this matter first came before the public. I believe I was the first person to mention it in public. The sole thought before me was that thousands of my countrymen, whom I believed to be patriotic, were in grave danger. I did not then know the full story of the I.N.A., but knowing my countrymen fairly well I could understand how they must have felt in a difficult situation. I realised also the repercussions on them of events in India. I had not appreciated the political and international approach of some of the leaders of the Indian independence movement in South East Asia. I had differed from them in the past on international and national issues. Nevertheless I felt kinship and sympathy for these people and I knew well what the reaction of the public mind in India would be. The possibility that some swift action by courts martial might be taken against large

2. Of the 60,000 men of the Indian Army, who were taken prisoner in the Second World War, some 40,000 stood firm to their oath of allegiance, resisting throughout their captivity the propaganda to which they were subjected and, in some cases, also facing starvation and torture.

numbers of them filled me with apprehension not only because of the persons involved, but also because of the inevitable consequences in India. Sensing all this I made my first public reference to the I.N.A. and followed this up with subsequent references. It did not strike me at all at the time that political advantage could be taken of this affair. Then a strange and surprising thing happened, not strange in itself but very surprising because of its depth and extent. Though I had sensed the mood of the Indian people, I had not fully realised how far it went in this direction. Within a few weeks the story of the I.N.A. had percolated to the remotest villages in India and everywhere there was admiration for them and apprehension as to their possible fate. No political organisation, however strong and efficient, could have produced this enormous reaction in India. It was one of those rare things which just fit into the mood of the people, reflect, as it were, and provide an opportunity for the public to give expression to that mood. The reason for this was obvious. Individuals were not known nor were many facts known to the public. The story as it developed seemed to the people just another aspect of India's struggle for independence and the individuals concerned became symbols in the public mind. Whether one agrees with this or not, one should at least understand how things happen and what forces lie behind them. The widespread popular enthusiasm was surprising enough, but even more surprising was a similar reaction of a very large number of regular Indian army officers and men. Something had touched them deeply. This kind of thing is not done and cannot be done by politicians or agitators or the like. It is this fundamental aspect of the I.N.A. question that has to be borne in mind. All other aspects, however important, are secondary.

I suppose everyone who has given thought to the matter realises fully that it is a dangerous and risky business to break the discipline of an army. It would obviously be harmful to do any injury to a fine instrument like the Indian army, and yet at every step, till major changes take place converting it into a real national army, we have to face the political issue which governs every aspect of Indian life today. Risks have to be taken sometimes, more especially when existing conditions are felt to be intolerable. You will forgive me for writing this rather long letter. It was my intention only to thank you; but then I felt that I should say something also on this subject, something that might give you a glimpse into my own mind.

Sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 8. Bhulabhai Desai<sup>1</sup>

After many months of travail and immense agony, Mr. Bhulabhai Desai has passed away.<sup>2</sup> His agony is over, but the shock and the grief of his death will remain. A big personality has gone, overworking himself to death. His finest memorial will be the brilliant and most memorable speech he delivered at the I.N.A. trial, a speech in which he defended the right of a subject people to freedom and their right to rebel for freedom.

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 6 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 7 May 1946.
2. Bhulabhai Desai died in Bombay on 6 May 1946 after being ill for four months.

### 9. To P.C. Bhandari<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
8 May 1946

My dear Bhandari,<sup>2</sup>

I haven't written to you for a long time. Sometimes Krishna Menon has sent me news of you. Three days ago Chandralekha arrived here and I was glad to have further news of you from her.

I am now writing to you about one special matter. You know that we have concerned ourselves greatly with the officers and personnel of the Indian National Army which was formed in Malaya and Burma. We have been giving them such help as possible. One of the officers, Colonel Irshad Ali Sahabzada, is suffering from cancer. He has been advised to go to England immediately for an operation by some well-known expert there, who, I think, is named Gabriel, but I am not sure of the name. The cancer hospitals in India did not like to undertake this operation. I suppose anyhow there is not much hope in such cases, but it was the patient's ardent wish that he should go to England and have this operation. We have made this a special case and our Relief Committee is giving him considerable financial assistance. Even so probably this will only cover about one-third of his expenses. He has necessarily to go by air and to be accompanied by a doctor.

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. A physician in London who was associated with the India League.

At present he is trying hard to get an air priority and probably the Government of India will give it to him within ten days. I should like you, both as a friend and a doctor, to give him all possible assistance in the matter. Perhaps it may be necessary to receive him when he arrives, to make some arrangement for him to stay somewhere and then to get into touch with the surgeon also to try to have all this done with as little expenditure as possible. How far this can be done, you know best. Colonel Sahabzada will be accompanied by Dr. Ayub (may be Captain Ayub). I have asked the I.N.A. office in Delhi to write to you full particulars about him and to cable you the time and date of his arrival in London. They will also write to Krishna Menon.

I should be grateful to you if you could help this poor man.

The I.N.A. office address is: I.N.A. Inquiry & Relief Committee, 82 Daryaganj, Delhi.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

I might add that Irshad Ali Sahabzada is himself a doctor. This might help in reducing fees.

#### 10. To Claude Auchinleck<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
9 May, 1946

Dear Sir Claude,

I have just received a telegram informing me that Subedar Jhanduram, who is awaiting the result of a court martial in an I.N.A. trial and who is now in the Indian Military Hospital in Delhi, lost his wife four days ago. His son is on his death bed and his mother is unconscious. I understand that he has applied for release on parole. In view of the calamities that have befallen him I trust that it will be considered a fit case for clemency by you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**11. To G. P. Hutheesing<sup>1</sup>**

Simla

11 May 1946

My dear Raja,

I have just received enclosed in Betty's letter six drafts which apparently you brought from Malaya. The drafts are as follows:

For Indian National Army Relief Fund	Rs. 301-0-0
" " " " " " "	501-0-0
For Indian Famine Relief Fund	501-0-0
For Jawaharlal Nehru	333-5-3
" " "	333-5-3
" " "	333-5-3

What are all these about, who gave them to you, to whom should receipts be sent? The I.N.A. Relief Fund is there, but so far as I know there is no Indian Famine Relief Fund. As for the three drafts in my name, surely there must be some indication of what they are for. Please send me particulars soon as the drafts are already nearly three months old.

I shall try to send you some letters for China though it is very difficult for me to find time for this kind of thing at present. They will have to be brief letters. I have received a letter from Harim J. Shah who says that he is going to China as a correspondent of the *Free Press*. He is apparently going to be a resident correspondent in China. I do not quite understand why the *Free Press* should send two persons, namely you and Shah to China.

I do not know what my programme is likely to be and how long we stay here. Please keep me informed of your address so that I can send the letters to you there.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

**12. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>**

...I then went on to say that I had been rather disturbed by indications that some provincial governments were contemplating the enlistment of

1. Simla, 13 May 1946. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 538-40.

large batches of I.N.A. men into the police.<sup>2</sup> I said that I was sure that this would upset the morale of the police and might bring the Governor, with his special responsibilities, into conflict with his ministry in one or more provinces. I asked that the Congress High Command should use their influence to stop any such proposal, if possible, in the interests of India as a whole, and of maintaining friendly relations between the governors and ministries. I said that he already knew my views about the I.N.A., and that while there was no desire whatever to persecute them, I was sure it was entirely wrong to give them preferential treatment in the matter of government service, more especially in the police.

Nehru began by saying that I had referred to the Congress High Command, that I should realise that it was a body with many different tendencies and stresses, including a very strong element of extremists which had lately been gaining ground. He said that while the Working Committee had been up at Simla there had been elections going on in the Congress organisation, and the results were showing a very distinct tendency towards the extremists. It was by no means certain that the present Working Committee would retain their influence over the more extreme elements.

I said that if this were so, it was all the more necessary that we should not disturb the morale of the police; and that I thought the proposal to introduce the I.N.A. element into the police probably came from the extremists.

We then had a longish talk about the I.N.A. He said that while most people now realised that they had gone too far in their glorification of the I.N.A., and the tendency was now swinging the other way, they were an element which had to be considered, since all parties were now angling to use them; and it was important to provide employment for them and thus keep them out of the hands of the more extreme elements. I said that I appreciated this, but that mass enlistment into the police was not a move which could be justified.

We had some discussion about the police, how they were regarded as the instruments of oppression, and how it was necessary to put something more "popular" in their place. I said that if Nehru meant by that introducing politics into the police, it would be as fatal to do so as to introduce it into the army; that the whole essence of government service was loyalty to the existing constitutional government; and that I was quite certain that all the services, including the police, would loyally serve a newly established government, and conform to new rules they

2. The Bombay Government had decided to recruit ex-I.N.A. men for the police service but were persuaded by the Governor not to do so.



might wish to make, provided that their morale was not upset by purges or witch-hunts. I said that if men were wanted for the police, surely it would be better to use men from the army who had shown unswerving loyalty to the Government, rather than men who, whatever their motives might have been, had once broken their faith. He said that he agreed with a great deal of what I said but that the loyal men were provided for by Government, whereas these I.N.A. men were left comparatively destitute and might get into bad hands.

We left it at that, his attitude was quite reasonable, but obviously the Congress consider it their duty to provide for the I.N.A. men as far as possible, and government service naturally seems to them the easiest way to do so.

I then turned to the connected point of enquiries into the 1942 rebellion, and victimization of Government servants. I said that it would be most unfortunate and have a most unsteady effect on all the services if enquiries were held and the unhappy past raked up. We had met the ministries in this matter by agreeing to the release of the Ashti-Chimur murderers for instance, and those convicted of murdering British officers; the ministries on their part ought not to provoke a conflict by trying to make enquiries.

Nehru did not say a great deal about this, and branched off into the matter of corruption among Government services. I agreed that it was a great evil which would have to be stamped out. We somehow diverged from this into the long delays of the law in India, and the necessity for reform of both civil and criminal procedure.

I then mentioned the negotiations for the formation of a new Executive Council, and agreed to meet him at 8-30 a.m. tomorrow.

### 13. To Mohan Singh<sup>1</sup>

Simla

14 May, 1946

My dear Mohan Singhji,

Ever since your release I have been anxious to get into touch with you and to meet you. So I was glad to receive your letter. We are all,

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

or nearly all, leaving Simla today. I have to go to Lucknow for a few hours. I hope to be back in Delhi on the 26th afternoon. After that I shall remain in Delhi at least for a week or so. From the 17th onwards we have got meetings of our Congress Working Committee, and of course there may be meetings with members of the Cabinet delegation.

You must have been informed of the meeting of senior I.N.A. officers that we have convened for the 21st May in Delhi. As you know we have had no opportunity of consulting them so far, except for casual talk with some of them. Most of our I.N.A. work had to be organised without any such consultation. Important problems now confront us and it is essential, not only in the interest of I.N.A. relief work but also in regard to the general situation in the country, that we consult these senior I.N.A. officers. I hope that you and Colonel Niranjan Singh Gill<sup>2</sup> will both come to these meetings.

On the next day, i.e., 22nd May, we intend having a meeting of the I.N.A. Relief and Inquiry Committee.

I suggest that you might come to Delhi on the 19th i.e. two days before these meetings. This would enable us to meet together and have a private talk about various matters including the important matter you suggest, i.e., our work among the Sikhs generally.

I have received the letter addressed to the Secretary of State which Colonel Gill has sent me. I have looked through this. It is not possible to give it to the Secretary of State here as I believe they have already left for Delhi. Apart from this, I am not quite clear in my mind as to whether we should give this exact communication to the Secretary of State. I should like to consider it more fully and then to discuss it with you and Colonel Gill.

Looking forward to meeting you in Delhi and with all good wishes and *Jai Hind*,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Niranjan Singh Gill (1906-1969); commissioned in the Indian Army, 1925; fought in the Malayan campaign; after the fall of Singapore adviser, Indian National Army, 1942; prisoner, Red Fort, Delhi, 1945-46; served for some time as ambassador of India to Ethiopia and to Thailand.

## 14. Need for Relief<sup>1</sup>

In December last the Working Committee of the Indian National Congress, at its meeting held in Calcutta, constituted a committee known as the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee for the purpose of gathering information and giving immediate relief, wherever needed, to the I.N.A. personnel and families in distress.

In response to the appeal made by this committee, the public gave generous contributions and provincial and other local committees were also formed for this purpose.

This central committee, with its affiliated committees, has been organizing relief work ever since that time. Nearly 25,000 men were brought back to India from various parts of East Asia and ultimately released from prison or detention.

Our immediate objective was to give to all of them who needed it some relief to enable them to reach their homes, and to provide them with their immediate requirements. Their families and the families of those who had not returned from East Asia were also in need of urgent help in many cases.

This was a huge task, as almost all of these I.N.A. men had returned to India after five to seven years of absence in a helpless condition, in many cases, in broken health.

The I.N.A. Defence Committee, which had been organized before by the Congress Working Committee, also needed considerable financial resources. This committee has done its work admirably and its remaining functions have been transferred to the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee.

A large number of I.N.A. men have still to be given immediate relief where it is found necessary, but the main problem before the relief committee is the rehabilitation of these men and of finding suitable employment for them.

It has been the policy of this committee to give relief, as far as possible, through productive work and employment.

As release of officers and men has taken place, many of them have helped in the work of organising relief. A conference of senior I.N.A. officers was held in Delhi recently and at that conference an advisory

1. A joint appeal by Jawaharlal and Vallabhbhai Patel for funds for I.N.A. relief work, Bombay, 23 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 July 1946.

committee was appointed in order to advise and help the central relief committee. A number of these officers have been put in direct charge of relief operations in various parts of the country.

We have still to carry on this work for a fairly long period and to bring it to a successful conclusion. Apart from the immediate demands for help the main problem is the absorption of these men in productive undertakings. In particular, we want to engage them in small scale industrial and cooperative enterprises. This will be beneficial both to them and to the nation. It will enable them to help themselves, and will also be a form of national service.

But this will require considerable sums of money, and there is also the need for helping the dependants of those who are dead or are permanently disabled. Their children have to be educated. For all these purposes, considerable funds are needed and our resources are nearly exhausted.

Committee and individual I.N.A. offices have been placed in charge of various provinces and areas. They are also authorised to collect subscriptions and to send these collections to the chairman of the I.N.A. Inquiry and Relief Committee at its head office, Congress House, Bombay....<sup>2</sup>

We appeal to the public to generously subscribe funds in order to enable the committee to finish its work.

2. A list of these committees and I.N.A. officers so authorised is omitted.

## 15. To J.R.D. Tata<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
21 August 1946

My dear Jehangir,<sup>2</sup>

It was good of you to take all the trouble to come here yesterday. I am sorry I couldn't meet your wishes, but I am quite sure in my own mind not only that I was right but that you will yourself feel that this is a right decision. It is right, of course, from the point of view of the

1. J.N. Collection.

2. (b. 1904); leading industrialist of India; chairman of the various concerns of Tata's; Chairman, Air India, 1953-78.

country as a whole and that must necessarily be the most important consideration. But I think it is right also from the point of view of the Tatas not only in the long run, when all of us may be dead, but in the short run. I am grateful to you and Matthai<sup>3</sup> for falling in with our wishes in this matter. We shall try our best to accommodate you.

There is one small matter to which I should like to draw your attention. We have opened an I.N.A. office at Jamshedpur to help in finding employment for ex-I.N.A. men. I hope your people will keep in touch with this office and give them such help as they can.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. John Matthai (1886-1959); Professor of Economics, Madras University; member, Madras Legislative Council, 1922-25; Minister of Railways and Transport, Government of India, August 1947-September 1948; Finance Minister, 1948-50; publications include *Village Government in British India*, *Agriculture and Co-operation in India* etc.



## **THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER**

### **I. The Congress Stand and Objective**





## 1. To Stafford Cripps<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
5 March 1946

Dear Stafford,

Thank you for your letter of February 10th which reached me rather late as I was touring. As you will be coming here soon there is no particular point in my writing to you. I suppose we shall meet before the end of the month. I do not know yet exactly when you are arriving. I am going to Malaya on the 16th on a brief visit but I am anxious to be back by the time you come.

I might mention, however, that I am troubled at some indications of the British Government's policy. They are vague no doubt and I believe that the Government wants to get a move on and come to a settlement. But what is the basis of this settlement? I find a strange reluctance to use the word "independence" with all that it conveys. "Self-government" is used in the old way and this is something that rubs people up in the wrong way. This is not a minor matter of wording. It is basic. I want you to appreciate that there is intense feeling here on the subject.

Again, there are references to our going back to 1942, whatever that might mean. There can be no going back for too much has happened since then, and India has changed vastly during this interval of four years. We have to deal with a new situation, an urgent situation, and to deal with it finally.

With all good wishes,

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. This letter was sent to Pethick-Lawrence by Cripps' Private Secretary and marked 'Confidential'. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VI, pp. 1107-8.

## 2. Guidelines for Negotiation<sup>1</sup>

1. It is essential that the basis of these conversations should be the independence of India. The proper course would be for the British
1. Confidential note drafted by Jawaharlal on the discussions to be held with the Cabinet Mission, 15 March 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Government to recognise this independence and then to proceed to discuss further steps to implement it. This recognition does not necessarily determine the form of relationship or alliance between free India and Britain. This question will have to be settled later between representatives of the two parties. If such a declaration or public recognition is not made to begin with by the British Government, even so it must be clearly understood that we can only talk on this basis and on no other.

2. Our talks are not a continuation of April 1942 nor are we going back in any way to the Cripps' offer.
3. We do not accept the proposition that for the present we have Dominion Status with power to secede later. What our exact relationship may be later need not be settled now, but it must be clear that it is on the present basis of independence that we consider future problems.
4. While we are prepared to enter into friendly talks about future relations, we are not agreeable to any treaty or alliance which binds us to join a bloc or a nation for war or like purposes. Nor are we agreeable to India being made the base of war operations against any country. This matter must be left to be determined by the future government of free India. We do not want to inherit old feuds or to entangle ourselves in the power politics or imperialist adventures of the great powers. We are prepared, however, to play our full part as a free and cooperating nation in the United Nations Organization.
5. It has also to be made perfectly clear that the constituent assembly should be the final authority to determine the constitution. It must not be a consultative or advisory body. What it finally decides may or may not be passed by the British Parliament (that is Britain's affair) but for us it should be the final decision. In effect the British Government should pass some kind of an act of abdication.
6. In present circumstances we cannot afford to delay matters by asking for a new electoral roll for the constituent assembly. We have to accept the newly elected provincial assemblies as electoral colleges for the purpose. They can elect delegates by proportional representation. The number can be settled later but it is preferable to have a fairly large number.
7. The procedure etc., in regard to the constituent assembly should be determined by representatives of the provincial governments. If any provincial government refuses to participate, it can be bypassed and

left out for the present. So also if any provincial assembly refuses to elect delegates, there should be no compulsion.

8. It should be made clear that the question of Pakistan (whatever precisely it might signify) will not be decided by a mere majority of votes in the constituent assembly. Questions of this kind will have to be settled either by consent of the parties or ultimately by plebiscite of all the inhabitants of an area on a precise and defined issue. The constituent assembly will, however, prepare a single constitution for India, with two lists of central subjects, one minimum and compulsory, and the other optional.
9. The question of defence and allied questions (foreign affairs, communications, as well as currency) are obviously central and common subjects which cannot be given up. Even if some kind of separation is envisaged some common arrangements for these will be necessary.
10. There may be a demand or suggestion for new demarcation of provincial boundaries resulting in division of the Punjab and Bengal, so that parts of these provinces should be predominantly Muslim. We should agree to any demarcation which creates cultural and linguistic areas which satisfy the majority of the people concerned.
11. In regard to the States we should follow more or less the same policy, *mutatis mutandis*, as in regard to the provinces. That is, it should be open to States to join the constituent assembly or not. There should be no compulsion. Provided of course that the States are represented predominantly by elected representatives (we may allow, in view of special circumstances, the ruler to have a representative or so), and provided also that the States agree to have the same or similar democratic forms of government and administrative and judicial efficiency as the provinces. It should be a privilege to be admitted to the constituent assembly, a privilege which will not be extended to States which fall below the standard.
12. There will be some difficulty in arranging for the representation of States as many of them have no proper democratic machinery. Also most of them are too small. But these matters can be considered more fully later. A full analysis of States, their elective assemblies where such exist, and other facts concerning them, is being prepared.
13. It is clear that only the big States (say from 15 to 20) can become units of the federation. The others have either to be absorbed in provinces or can form a large enough group to form a unit.
14. Our claim must be that the new Central Government of India

inherits the power and authority of the present Government of India or the Crown Representative in regard to the States. However, we need not settle this matter finally at this stage if some States object. We can allow matters to drift for a while, and allow the constituent assembly to begin functioning when it will inevitably draw the States. The new Government of India will of course be a joint affair of all constituent units — provinces and States. If any States are left out to begin with, we shall have to deal with them later.

15. We cannot, however, recognise the independence of the States though we may recognize their autonomy (if they are big enough) within the federation. Nor can we accept the stationing of foreign troops there.
16. It is possible that the Muslim League may suggest Dominion Status, with defence in British hands, for their Pakistani areas. This might be considered an inducement to the British Government. Such a development is likely to be advantageous to us and is bound to weaken the League position.
17. These are brief notes very hurriedly written. The main points are:
  - (i) Discussion on basis of independence
  - (ii) Constituent assembly to have final authority
  - (iii) No compulsion of a province or a State to join constituent assembly but if any wants to keep out at the beginning, it can be bypassed.
  - (iv) There should be no delay. Time is the essence of the matter and we must not get entangled in long discussion about details.
  - (v) The main principles having been accepted we go ahead with the constituent assembly and then representatives elected by the constituent assembly discuss with British representatives our future contacts, relations.
  - (vi) No entanglements in war or joining of imperialist blocs against another group.
  - (vii) Cooperation in U.N.O.
18. The formation of a provisional Central Government is essential. This also should proceed on the basis of provincial governments as far as possible. This government must in practice act freely as a cabinet with no obstruction from the Viceroy or any other outside authority. The India Office should not function.

### 3. A Welcome Change in Tone<sup>1</sup>

Any kind of consideration of Mr. Attlee's<sup>2</sup> speech should obviously be done by the Congress President. I can only point out certain aspects that struck me. One is that there is certainly a change in tone and approach in Mr. Attlee's speech — a pleasant change if I may say so — and I welcome it. I should like to add that mere expressions of goodwill, even when couched in friendly terms, do not take one very far by themselves. They will, of course, help in the consideration of the subject, but the main question is what is to be considered and how.

Obviously, we have arrived at a stage when no half-measures can be considered at all. Discussions based on the acceptance of India's independence can alone bear fruit. Looking at the problem in a wider international context, it must be borne in mind that India is not willing to be bound down to any commitments.

We have enough experience of having been dragged to support policies which we do not approve. It will be for the free India to determine what its foreign policy and foreign commitments should be. Naturally, India stands, and will stand, for world peace and for ending aggression. But what we have seen often enough is that in the name of democracy and of preventing aggression, imperialist countries try to retain their old possessions or to expand them. The present international situation is the result of the failure of the countries which have not acted up to the professions made during the war.

The problems of subject countries have not been solved. There is still talk of holding on to the empires and protecting the lifelines of the empires. Each country finds fault with the other and each of the great powers continues to be attracted by the smell of oil. It is difficult for me to know all that is happening outside this country. But one feels that this oily game is a dirty game.

So we do not want to be forced into any commitment which might be against our future interests. But we shall certainly play our part in

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 16 March 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 17 March and *The Hindu*, 17 March 1946.
2. C.R. Attlee (1883-1967); leader of the British Labour Party, 1935-55; Deputy Prime Minister, 1943-45; Prime Minister, 1945-51. Attlee said on 15 March 1946: "Is it any wonder that today India claims — as a nation of 400 million people that has twice sent her sons to die for freedom — that she should herself have freedom to decide."

the international organisations like the U.N.O. to prevent war. One of the necessary steps is to remove the principal cause of war, namely the desire of one country to dominate other countries. If this goes, other problems are easy of solution.

**Question:** Would you clarify the reasons for the rejection of the Viceroy's invitation to Mahatma Gandhi to join the proposed four-man food committee?<sup>3</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: Honestly, I do not know much about it. The matter did not come at all before the Working Committee.

**Q:** A report has been circulated that a sub-committee, consisting of the Congress President, yourself and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, has been formed to negotiate with the Cabinet Mission?

JN: I do not know of any committee having been formed. No members of the Working Committee have been appointed to negotiate with the Cabinet Mission. Naturally we expect to meet the Cabinet Mission, but we have made no programme of any kind except that we may have to come up. The Congress President would meet the Cabinet Mission in his official capacity and other members of the Committee would meet the Mission in their individual capacity.

**Q:** Will Mahatma Gandhi be coming to Delhi to meet the Cabinet Mission and, if he comes, would his role in the forthcoming talks be similar to that of his role during the Simla Conference?

JN: If he is summoned by us, he will certainly come. Mahatma Gandhi's role at Simla was the same which he had always played in Congress affairs. I have no idea as to how the Cabinet Mission will function. We have made no plans ourselves. The Mission may meet the officials in Delhi during the first week. The Congress leaders have received invitations from the Government to meet the Cabinet Mission. I myself have received no invitation to meet the Mission.

**Q:** Will the developments in the Middle East have any bearing on the forthcoming talks between the Congress leaders and the Cabinet Mission?

3. To Wavell's attempt to set up a central food advisory body consisting of Mahatma Gandhi, Jinnah and the Nawab of Bhopal with himself as the chairman, the Congress replied that a settlement on the political level would achieve the object sooner.

JN: I cannot say how far the discussions will go. Obviously, the subject of defence will come up in any discussions. It has become doubly important because of the developments in the Middle East.

Q: Will the Congress leaders be willing to meet the Muslim League leaders?

JN: The Congress is prepared to meet anybody and everybody. If some Congressmen have spoken against the Muslim League, their opposition is to a certain policy and is not directed against any individual.

Q: Would you clarify your remark made at a Bombay press conference that the Congress had conceded 95 per cent of the Pakistan demand?

JN: I reiterate that what the Congress has already offered in regard to full autonomy to the federating units is 95 per cent of Pakistan.

Q: Will the Congress make any more concessions on the Pakistan demand?

JN: It is a question pertaining to the policy of the Congress which is to be seen in its election manifesto and in its various resolutions. According to these resolutions, the federal union is to consist of willing units which are to have full autonomy in all matters, except in respect of a minimum number of common subjects which will, obviously, be defence, foreign affairs, communications and currency. There will be, in addition, an optional list of common subjects. The federating units will have 95 per cent independence, besides a big share in the joint concern.

Defence is bound to be a common subject in any scheme of a constitution, as without adequate defence for the country there is no security, and without security, there is no freedom. I am willing to support a proposal for rearrangement of provinces with a view to carving out units with cultural homogeneity.

It is quite clear that while we cannot compel an area to join the union we cannot also compel an area, which is part of the union, to go out of it. For instance, if a big chunk in the Punjab wants to join the union, it cannot be kept out of it.

The election results do not clearly indicate the extent of support to the demand for Pakistan.<sup>4</sup> If we have to decide the question, we will

4. In the provincial elections, the Congress won 930 out of 968 general seats gaining absolute majorities in eight provinces and in the remaining three becoming the second largest party in the assembly. The Muslim League won 428 out of 492 reserved seats. The League was able to form ministries only in two of the five provinces claimed for Pakistan, namely Bengal and Sind. Even there it had to secure the support of other parties and in particular that of the European group.

have to arrange a plebiscite in a defined area on the specific issue whether the inhabitants of that area want to leave the union.

Q: What is the main purpose of your forthcoming visit to Malaya?

JN: I wish to study the problems connected with the relief work for the Indian residents in Malaya. While I am going only to Malaya, we are at present concerned with the Indians who are in trouble in other parts of South East Asia. I have received a letter that a prominent Indian, named Puran Singh, has been court martialled and sentenced to seven years' imprisonment in Bomco, presumably because of his membership in the Indian Independence League.

I will not stop in Burma. I have received plenty of complaints from Indians in the Andamans and Bangkok about cases being started against Indians.

Q: Would you meet Lord Louis Mountbatten?

JN: I expect to meet Lord Louis after my arrival in Singapore, day after tomorrow. So far there has been no correspondence between Lord Louis and myself. My main purpose in going to Malaya is to give psychological relief to our countrymen there and to find out what we can do to relieve their troubles.

The problem of Indians in South East Asia is political as well as economic. On the political side, are such questions as the position of the members of the I.N.A. and the Indian Independence League. On the economic side, there are the shortages of food and cloth.

I have received reports that Indian women in Malaya are going about wearing gunny bags as their dress. Urgent demands have been made for saris. Millowners in Bombay are prepared to gift immediately a hundred bales of cloth. I wrote to the Government of India a month ago for an export licence and transport facilities to despatch the cloth to Malaya, but the matter has not yet been decided.

Q: What do you propose to do in Malaya?

JN: I want that Malayan Indians themselves should effectively organise relief. I have asked the Indian leaders in Malaya to organise public meetings so that I can speak directly to the people. I have made it clear that I am not going to Malaya in the same way as I would go about in India on election tours. I am going there primarily to meet



prominent Indians. I would visit Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Ipoh and other places *en route*.

**Q:** Have you heard the complaints of Indian evacuees not being able to return to Malaya?

**JN:** I have heard reports to the contrary. I have been informed that a large number of Indians in Malaya are being pushed back into India. Many of them have no homes here having been born and brought up in Malaya. I doubt the wisdom of sending all these people back to Madras which is just now in the grip of a famine.

#### 4. The Congress and other Parties<sup>1</sup>

If the people of India are suddenly confronted with the prospect of independence not coming by agreement, there will inevitably be an enormous upheaval in India, whether we like it or not. It is not a question of the Congress desiring it, but the conditions in the country demand it.

**Question:** It is said that if the Muslim League does not get Pakistan there might be trouble.

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** I agree. There might be minor troubles, but if we avoid compelling any party against its will, I do not see why there should be major troubles.

I think that the best way of dealing with the present situation is to clearly recognise the need for independence and leave the Indians free to compose their differences and find a way out. It is always difficult to consider these differences in relation to the presence of a third party which controls the situation. For then, the main parties do not come to grips with the reality and they try to manoeuvre their position *vis-a-vis* the third party. When once it is clearly and definitely realised that India is going to function as an independent entity and that the people of

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 3 April 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 4 April 1946.

India, consisting of various groups and communities, must come to terms, or unfortunately fight before they come to terms, then reality prevails.

Q: What would follow if Britain grants immediate independence and leaves the Indian people to decide all issues including the demand for Pakistan?

JN: So far as the Congress is concerned, its decision is not going to involve compulsion of the minority by the majority. We have made this perfectly clear.<sup>2</sup> A situation has to be created where every party would feel that the decision-making lies with it and not with an external party.

I envisage as the first stage, after the recognition of independence, the creation of a constitution-making body with sovereign authority. This will be quite easy and it can be framed from the recently elected provincial assemblies. I think that it is important that the constitution-making body should have final authority, but, in order to avoid a feeling of compulsion, it should be made clear that any area not willing to come into the constituent assembly will not be compelled, though the door would always be open.

Thus it is possible that one or two areas might carry on autonomously for the time being and the matter could subsequently be decided by a plebiscite on this specific issue, all inhabitants participating in the voting.

It is obvious, for instance, that the North West Frontier Province is against the idea of Pakistan and it is certain that the southern and central parts of the Punjab are also in the same position. There is no question of their being pushed out of the constitution-making body and the future constitution against their wishes, but if parts of the Punjab or Sind do not cooperate in the constitution-making body, they are perfectly entitled to their stand until the matter is decided by the vote of the inhabitants.

It must be remembered that we envisage the new constitution as a federation of willing units with the largest amount of autonomy to each unit—in fact, enjoying semi-independence leaving a minimum of common subjects for the Centre. These subjects include defence, external affairs, communications, currency. Each unit can have the maximum freedom to develop itself as it chooses. It is proposed to have an optional list of common subjects, which the units may accept or reject.

2. The Congress Working Committee, in its resolution of September 1945, laid down that the Congress had no intention of coercing the people of any particular area, if they desired, by a vote of the overwhelming majority, to keep out of the Indian Union.

It must be seen that the real political and social elements in the country, desiring independence as well as social change, are lined up with the Congress. The Muslim League undoubtedly represents, in a general way, large numbers of Muslims, but it is politically and socially a reactionary body, largely representing the landlords and being afraid of any democratic change. Yet the Muslim masses are not reactionary, though they may be led away by religious pulls.

We are undoubtedly in favour of independence and of the British authority quitting India. I do not think, therefore, that if this is our aim, there is likely to be any major trouble for us. But today there is an unfortunate tendency to violence and arson in various parts of the country, partly as a result of the after-effects of the war, and partly because of the encouragement of the Muslim League, which has been talking in terms of civil war and bloodshed, and carrying on a propaganda of hatred.<sup>3</sup> We shall have to face this situation. But I do not think if people are given a definite and clear lead and approach, there will be a major conflict.

One should not forget that while the Muslim League has won a large number of seats in the recent elections, the number of Muslim votes cast for the Congress and the Nationalist Muslim candidates had been considerable. It is clear that a very substantial number of Muslims do not follow the League in spite of its religious propaganda.

The fundamental issue during the elections has been whether we should consider the country's problems in their political and economic context, or in the medieval and religious aspect. The Congress and the Nationalist Muslims represent the former approach while the Muslim League represents the latter approach, ignoring all economic issues.

I cannot envisage a Pakistan from the point of view of defence or planned development. I cannot see it, but, in order to make the people feel that they are not being compelled against their will, we are prepared to allow those in the predominantly Muslim areas to vote themselves out. I don't see where they will get to, but let them have a sense of freedom. I hope, when they look at Pakistan in this specific limited context, they will realise the absurdity of it. So far it is just a vague conception without a geographical definition.

I want the people to vote on this very definite issue so that they can realise the consequences. I can very well understand the fear of the Muslims, who are industrially and economically backward, that some kind of economic domination by others might come into existence. We are

3. Jinnah had warned on 16 March 1940 that, driven to desperation, the Muslim League might bring about a civil war in India.

prepared to do everything in our power to dispel this apprehension, and to help the backward areas develop industrially, and otherwise.

Q: How do you view the challenge<sup>4</sup> of the Communists to the policy of the Congress?

JN: The Communist Party in India has been very small for many years, and it is still relatively small though energetic. Since the war, the Communists have adopted a more definite attitude in support of the Muslim League.

In the recent elections they opposed the Congress, and naturally, this has led to a tremendous widening of the gulf between Congress and the Communists, but almost everywhere the Communists have been severely defeated.

The Communist Party is weak in India. But even a weak, but active party, can take advantage of worsening economic conditions and of the food situation. They may give a lot of trouble to Congress Ministries because they feel they must justify their existence now.

Q: What would be the position of a new India in the world context?

JN: A free India will be concerned with its defence and security. It will build up its defence and industries for that purpose as rapidly as possible. It will like to play a role in international affairs in favour of peace, in cooperation with any organisation such as the U.N.O. The new India will not, however, like to inherit old feuds or commit itself to the offensive or defensive policy of any group of nations.

But inevitably, India will sympathise and cooperate with those who have been interested in its freedom struggle. It is difficult to say in which way our freedom might be threatened, but whoever threatens it will inevitably come up against the overwhelming sentiment determined to preserve the hard-earned freedom. This aspect is one of the major considerations in our attitude to the Pakistan question.

4. The Communists contended that every linguistic group in India had a distinct nationality and was therefore entitled, as was the case in the U.S.S.R., to the right of self-determination. The *People's War* of 9 August 1942 in an editorial stated: "A minority must be given the right to secession, the right to form an independent state... To look upon the right of secession as the special fad of Jinnah, as the conspiracy of a few Communists to divide India in the interests of British imperialism, is to ignore the new Muslim awakening, as also of other nationalities, e.g., Andhras, Kamatahis, Maharashtrians etc., the awakening of a distinct nationality to a new life, individual national consciousness".

Curiously enough, the Communist Party in India has suggested a division of India into over 15 parts—each having a separate constitution-making body—that subsequently might join together if they desire. If there is to be such a division, all manner of vested interests will be there, which will weaken the country and make its defence utterly impossible.

I endorse the statement<sup>5</sup> made by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru that an interim government composed of accredited Indian leaders must be set up at once to provide proper cooperation with the popularly elected provincial governments now taking office. I would support it with a story. In the year before the war when the Congress Ministry was functioning in the United Provinces, an effort was made to start the manufacture of industrial alcohol from molasses. The effort was blocked by the Central Government on the ground that it would reduce the revenue from the duty on petrol. The move was obviously aimed at protecting the interests of the oil industry. But when the war came, the manufacture of alcohol was undertaken by the Government then under pressure, but four years behind time.

5. Sapru said on 3 April 1946 that there was the necessity of an interim government being formed "almost immediately" even without waiting for a settlement of the Pakistan question.

## 5. The Economic Problem in India<sup>1</sup>

What is Pakistan? To understand this and similar issues, one must try to get behind the surface of events and slogans. The League leadership represents mostly the landlord element in India. It talks a lot about Hindu capitalists while it tries to preserve the landlord element in the country and all that goes with it. It avoids the problem of the Indian States altogether. Most of its candidates, at least in my province, in the recent elections were the biggest landlords.

One must bear in mind the social aspect of the Muslim League. The League is opposed to social, political and economic changes. It favours

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 4 April 1946. From *The Free Press Journal*, 5 April 1946.

the continuance of the *status quo*. It is content with the British raj. It cannot openly take this stand. Therefore, it covers its view in the vague slogan for Pakistan.

The League has fought the elections on religious slogans. The kind of Pakistan that Mr. Jinnah has put forward is utterly inconceivable. It cannot be achieved even by coercion. The areas of Pakistan include the North West Frontier Province, Assam, south and central Punjab, West Bengal and the city of Calcutta.<sup>2</sup>

So the demand for Pakistan, in effect, serves the purpose, not for bringing about any change even in the form of Pakistan as asked for, but for really blocking all changes. It serves the League's desire to maintain the *status quo*.

It is true, I think, that the Muslim masses do not want the present situation to continue. They want political and economic changes, but they are misled by religious slogans and vague dreams of an undefined empire. That is why the League deliberately avoids economic issues, and concentrates chiefly on the religious issue, "Islam in danger". Everybody knows that religious or cultural beliefs are not going to be endangered.

We have to resolve the basic issue of economic conflict. In this conflict the Congress stands for political, social and revolutionary changes for people, as well as for democracy. We also realise that many Muslims have the fear of economic domination by non-Muslims and, therefore, we want to do our utmost to remove this fear and suspicion.

It is true that the Indian community is, really speaking, rather backward. To remedy this, we want to ensure in our constitution that no exploitation of one group by another or of the masses by the moneyed classes will be possible. We want an evenly balanced development to prevent the concentration of wealth in the hands of one class of people or in one area of the land. The National Planning Committee has made this its chief objective in planning.

This is desirable for reasons of development and defence. If industries and wealth are concentrated in one or a few places it will be an invitation to the enemy. The Congress policy today is to solve the agrarian question and landlordism and develop rapidly the resources to raise the standard of living throughout the country.

2. On 2 April 1946, Jinnah told a British correspondent, who doubted whether Calcutta, three-fourths Hindu in population, could be included in Pakistan: "I am not counting heads. This is a question of carving out an independent sovereign state, and other factors besides the number of Muslim and Hindu inhabitants enter into it."

We aim at a greater production and at a more equitable distribution. We have, therefore, laid down that monopolies should be sternly discouraged. Mineral resources, waterways, transport and communications must be state-controlled; defence and other key industries must either be state-owned or controlled.

This approach is essential for a planned economy and for preventing the accumulation of power in a few hands. If there is a Pakistan, it will be backward socially, industrially and economically. Thus we have to warn the Muslims and other communities against such a situation.

The Congress envisages the fullest autonomy for federated units which will give free scope to all people to develop their way of life in any manner they choose. There is no question of the compulsion by a majority of a minority. Further, the Congress has gone so far as to declare that if any specific area wants to go out of the union, it can do so by means of a referendum, provided it does not drag others against their will.

The present world situation compels us to think in terms of India as one unit. Any division would terribly weaken the defence of the nation. The Indian problem cannot be solved by going round in the old way. We must get out of the rut, and the essential thing for India is to realise that it is going to be independent and will have to decide for itself what its future is going to be. That is why the first step has to be the establishment of independence.

Britain must make it clear here and now that Indians will be left to decide all their issues and that the British Army will be withdrawn at a specified date in the not-too-distant future. This attitude will lend a sense of reality to the Indian situation. All parties and groups will then resolve their differences. An agreement is bound to emerge on this basis.

There is too much passion and, if the situation is allowed to drift further, it will lead to a violent upheaval. The Congress is not afraid of facing such dangers, but it will endeavour to avoid them because they leave a trail of bitterness and retard the all-important work of national reconstruction.

There is no time to waste. I am determined to see the country on the road to recovery and greatness and, therefore, the sooner the question of freedom is settled, the better.

I am of opinion that once people realise that the method of negotiations has failed, no power on earth can stop the tremendous resurgence of violent action. The crucial period has now arrived. Are we going to have sovereignty without further suffering, or will this long tormented

nation have to go through the worst period in its history? The answer will soon be forthcoming.

## 6. Independence the Immediate Issue<sup>1</sup>

The difficult problems in India are not so much those about which people talk and become heated, such as Pakistan, although such problems exist. The primary problem for India is the economic problem—to solve, as far as we can, the problem of poverty, and raise the standard of living.

But when I say the economic problem is the primary problem, that does not mean that it is the first problem, because the economic problem cannot be tackled before the political problem is solved.

I should like every leader and every political party to put forward views and demands in relation to the economic problem of India, because, if they are not so related, then what is demanded is unreal and superficial.

I should like to consider the problem of Pakistan from the point of view of economic issues, from the point of view of defence and of international affairs.

My feeling is that a discussion of internal questions without first having independence is like a lawyer's wrangle. People with the livery of authority under foreign rule cannot determine the fate of the masses. Only when foreign rule is withdrawn would a proper equilibrium be established. I am quite convinced that once independence is recognised and brought into being, we shall solve the problems that face us today, such as Pakistan or the question of the Indian States.

Question: What is the position of the provinces which might not want to join the constituent assembly?

Jawaharlal Nehru: I hope that the force of circumstances will bring them into the constituent assembly. But during the intervening period,

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 5 April 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April, *National Herald*, 6 April and *The Hindu*, 6 April 1946.



if India functions as an independent entity, those provinces would be autonomous units under the suzerainty of a central authority.

Q: Suppose those provinces declare their independence and start building up an armed force...

JN: If any party starts arming against us, superior arms will prevail. Warfare in modern times assumes industrial development of a high order. Tomorrow's army may consist largely of technicians with scientists at their back. Those who want can play about with guns and revolvers. But the atom bomb will decide wars in the future.

Q: Master Tara Singh has expressed doubts about the Congress attitude to the Pakistan issue..."

JN: Master Tara Singh enjoys the unique privilege of sitting on about fifteen stools at the same time, which is a ridiculous and fantastic position. Any person trying to do that will have a bad fall one day. If he wants to go into the League camp, he can do so.

Q: What worries Master Tara Singh is whether the Congress will under any circumstances agree to the League demand for Pakistan?"

JN: I have reiterated the Congress stand on many occasions. I assert once again that under no circumstances will the Congress agree to the creation of Pakistan. That is dead clear. Is it not? I hope you will convey it to Master Tara Singh.

The Congress is not going to agree to the Muslim League's demand for Pakistan under any circumstances whatsoever — even if the British Government agrees to it, it is not a question of the Congress agreeing or not. I know something of the Indian people. If the Congress agrees to the demand even then it will not come off. Nothing on earth, not even the United Nations Organisation, is going to bring about the Pakistan which Mr. Jinnah wants.

2. On 4 April 1946, Jinnah conferred with Master Tara Singh at the latter's New Delhi residence. When asked by journalists about his talks, Master Tara Singh said that Jinnah had conceded the principle of Sikhistan and wanted the Akalis to give him their scheme. Master Tara Singh in reply had asked Jinnah to state in writing the safeguards which the League would extend to the Sikhs.
3. Master Tara Singh, who presented his views to the Cabinet Mission on 5 April 1946, feared that either as a result of an understanding between the Congress and the League or in terms of an imposed settlement, Pakistan might come into being. In that case, he demanded that the area in which the Sikhs predominated should be formed into a separate Sikh state.

Large areas, which Mr. Jinnah claims as Pakistan,<sup>4</sup> are so fundamentally and determinedly opposed to the idea of Pakistan that you cannot compel them to agree to the demand, whatever the Muslim League or others intend to do in the matter.

Particular areas, which want to part company with the rest of India, will not be compelled to remain within it. As a matter of fact, if you examine Pakistan in this diluted and restricted angle, it becomes so difficult of constitution as a state that it is almost inconceivable.

Redistribution of provincial boundaries on a linguistic and cultural basis is essential and inevitable, because the Congress wants provinces to be autonomous units culturally and linguistically, as far as possible. I want such cultural and linguistic units to grow up with a sense of freedom and without a sense of compulsion.

I want not only provincial autonomy, but, if necessary, within the provinces, smaller semi-autonomous areas. Take the Sikhs for instance. If they desire to function as a separate unit, I should like them to have a semi-autonomous area within the province, so that they may have a sense of freedom. Economically they will be a part of the province.

Q: Don't you think that the present negotiations with the Cabinet Mission ought not to cover any other subject, except the immediate transfer of power, and that all other issues like Pakistan, Sikhistan and the rest are not germane to the discussions?

JN: I think, however, that there is nothing improper in discussing anything, but such discussions should be on the basis of transfer of power.

Q: What is your comment on the attitude of the Indian Princes?

JN: I am glad that some of the Indian Princes have taken up more or less an attitude which might be summed up as follows: Let there be independence immediately, including withdrawal of the British army, and we shall solve our problems among ourselves. This is a dignified attitude for any Indian to take, whatever his party or views may be, and this is the only real attitude, because ultimately there can be no doubt that problems will be solved by the Indian people themselves and by no outside authority.

4. Jinnah said on 31 March 1946 that "the north-west and north-east zones of India, where no less than 70 per cent of the population is Muslim, should be separated and constituted into independent sovereign states." This statement contemplated a redrawing of the provincial boundaries of the Punjab and Bengal where the Muslims were a little more than a bare majority.

An Indian State wishing to join the federation, we envisage, will have equal status within the federation, having the same responsibilities, privileges and obligations as any other unit.

Every state will, of course, have to maintain the same level of administration and democratic liberty as the rest of India. The exact form might vary slightly, but it is impossible to conceive of varying levels of feudalism and democracy in the States, forming part of the federation.

The issue of independence cannot be left to the constituent assembly, because then it means really nothing is decided and everything is left in a chaotic condition.

**Q:** Who will decide India's foreign relations?

**JN:** The constituent assembly will decide India's relations with Britain and other nations. Inevitably, we have a large number of matters to consider in conjunction with our relations with Britain, and they should be considered by representatives of the constituent assembly and those of the British Government eventually in the context of independence.

It will be possible for us to have close and friendly relations, economic and otherwise, with Britain. Such relations will depend mostly on the national interests of the parties concerned. Obviously, an independent India will make its own friends wherever it likes. Obviously also, every country thinks primarily of its own interests, and its foreign policy is determined by those interests, though I hope that in an independent India the ideals, which have been governing our national movement, will govern our international relations.

I disapprove of Great Britain's foreign policy, particularly in relation to Indonesia. This reminds me to refer to India's relations with its neighbour countries. Whatever be our relations with other countries in the world, and I hope they will all be friendly, it is inevitable that we will draw closer to Asian countries, east of India, southeast and west. Indeed, you can say we are already joined together.

All over Asia there is not merely a revival of old memories and historical connections, although that is important, but much more important, there is the compulsion of geography and of developing events.

Whether it is trade or defence, either of the Middle East, West Asia or South East Asia or East Asia, the pivot and fulcrum is India, and when I say South East Asia in these matters, I include Australia and New Zealand in the Indian Ocean region.

I have suggested and some others have done likewise<sup>5</sup> that we should convene in India a conference of representatives from Asian countries to consider common problems. This suggestion has met with approval, to my knowledge, in many countries. But at present there are so many difficulties in the way of travel that it is not easy to organise such a conference. I hope it will be possible to do so before very long.

Q: What is your comment on the affairs in South Africa?

JN: The policy pursued by General Smuts<sup>6</sup> is hundred per cent Nazism. What the future is going to be in South Africa I cannot say, but I can say with the utmost conviction that we are not going to tolerate the policy being carried on there,<sup>7</sup> and we are going to face all the consequences of opposing this policy, not only in South Africa, but in Asia as a whole, and in the world, because it raises a fundamental racial issue which involves all Asians and Africans, and the so-called coloured races. As long as this issue is not solved satisfactorily, it is going to be a menace to the peace of the world.

It might have been possible to postpone a decision for a little while, but General Smuts has seen fit to bring it to the forefront now. Well, I, for one, am not sorry. It is best to deal with these ugly questions as early as possible.

To me the U.N.O. will be an absurdity if it tolerates racialism of this type. I do not expect the U.N.O. to go along with South Africa on this issue, but I do expect the U.N.O. and the rest of the British empire, if they are earnest about it, to dissociate themselves from South Africa, and cut it away from the family of nations, if it follows this Nazi doctrine. If the U.N.O., Europe, or America do not do that, a time will soon come when entire Asia may do it and so might Africa, where South Africa is situated.

I am more interested in the economic background of Indian and world problems than in normal political developments. I have studied the problems in the National Planning Committee and have come to

5. Prominent leaders in Syria, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon had expressed themselves in favour of their countries participating in an inter-Asian relations conference. Aung San said that "subject nations of Asia will unite to achieve their freedom."
6. Jan Christian Smuts (1870-1950); fought the British in the Boer War, 1899-1902; thereafter worked for the formation of the Union of South Africa as a self-governing part of the British empire; Prime Minister of South Africa, 1919-24 and 1939-48.
7. Smuts had taken the stand that the European minority in South Africa should dominate the African majority and the large Indian and coloured minorities. He argued that Western civilization was being menaced by the Indians.

the conclusion that these problems cannot be tackled in a piecemeal way, more so because India has put up with arrested growth under British rule for more than 150 years. Agriculture is the main field of development. It cannot be promoted unless feudal relics are swept away, modern methods of agriculture are introduced and cooperative farming is encouraged.

I am glad that the Congress has definitely and finally decided to end landlordism, by giving compensation to the landlords. In dealing with agriculture, the burden on the land has to be reduced by drawing off a large number of people to industry, both large-scale and cottage. If agriculture and industry are developed, it means the development of social services for the four hundred million people of India.

Lots of people are overwhelmed by the population figure of 400 million. I am not. First, I do not think there are 400 millions. The last census is hopelessly wrong. Separate electorates — the father and mother of Pakistan — have led to a complete falsification of the census. For separate electorates offer a strong inducement to the average person to tell a lie.

The Statistical Society, which is an authoritative body, and which conducted a survey of the population of Bengal four years after the last census, found that the population was six million less than that of the census figure in 1941. Normally population shows an increase in four years.

Thus the figure of 400 millions is all wrong. Apart from this, even assuming this figure is correct, India is less densely populated than most of Europe, and there are in India large areas which can be cultivated and populated with state assistance. Further, a population might be too great for an agricultural country, but might not be great at all if the country is industrialised. It depends on what the country is and what avenues of production exist. If every man is a worker he is an asset. Nevertheless, planned society is essential for India and so it is desirable to control the increase of population.

## 7. The Weakness of the Demand for Pakistan<sup>1</sup>

Question: Are you optimistic about the outcome of the present negotiations?

1. Interview to R.P. Dutt who visited India to cover the Cabinet Mission negotiations for the *Daily Worker* (London). From *The Hindustan Times*, 6 April 1946.

Jawaharlal Nehru: I really don't know. I would put the chances at 50-50.

Q: Are you sure that Britain intends to quit India?

JN: Imperialism never intends to give up what it has got, but conditions and forces may arise which force the pacc. I do think that such conditions have arisen or are rapidly arising in India.

Q: Is independence compatible with the continuance of British military forces in India?

JN: No. All British armed forces must be withdrawn from India.

Q: How should the transfer of power take place? What should be the character of the interim national government?

JN: First there must be a recognition and declaration of independence. Then steps must be taken for a proper constitution to be drafted by an elected constituent assembly which has sovereign authority. During the intervening period a provisional national government should be formed which will function partly by convention and partly on the basis of some legal changes, but exercising powers of a national government. In the present circumstances it will probably be desirable to form this national government on the basis of elected provincial governments.

Q: What should be the basis of the constituent assembly?

JN: We have always urged that the constituent assembly should be elected by adult franchise, but at present this might involve delay and to avoid this we might accept the elected provincial assemblies as electoral colleges for the constituent assembly.

Q: Does the Congress recognise the right of self-determination of any territorial unit within India?

JN: The Congress is convinced that any division would be injurious to India as a whole and to the separate areas or groups concerned, and, therefore, we work for the unity of India. But realising the diversity of India and wishing to preserve it and to give a just measure of freedom to each group it stands for a great deal of autonomy to each unit within a federation so that the people of that unit can live their own lives as they wish. In spite of this desire for unity the Congress feels that any unity

based on compulsion would be a false unity and it wants to have willing units. It hopes that ultimately it will have the willing cooperation of all the groups and areas in a federation of this kind. But if any particular area still wants to break away, it does not wish to compel it to remain within the federation provided this is geographically possible and no other areas are compelled against their will to go out.

The scheme of Pakistan as proposed by the Muslim League involves compulsion of large areas to join Pakistan against their will. That is impossible to achieve without conflicts. If any area still wants to break away, the result is going to be, in the present circumstances, the creation of a state which is weak and backward and which cannot defend itself. We hope, therefore, that when these inevitable consequences are seen in a proper perspective the people of these areas will themselves agree to remain in a federation. In any case, the question of defence cannot be ignored and there would have to be common defence.

**Q:** Does the official policy of the Congress stand for the abolition of landlordism and State ownership of key resources?

**JN:** The Congress election manifesto<sup>2</sup> is explicit on this. The official policy of the Congress is the abolition of landlordism with equitable compensation; state ownership of mineral resources, communications, transport and waterways; state control of insurance and banking; state ownership and control of defence industries and key industries and some kind of planned control in other fields of the economy.

**Q:** What is your view of the present international situation, especially of the proposals being put forward for an Anglo-American military alliance?<sup>3</sup>

**JN:** Any Anglo-American alliance would immediately lead to two results: (1) the progressive elimination of the U.N.O. as an international organisation; (2) the development of other alliances against this special alliance. This again might lead to future wars. Some such tendencies are already at work. If any international order is to be built up there must not be any such military alliances and nations will have to function within the international organisation and not outside it. Of course as long as the basic causes of war are not dealt with and removed, there will be tendencies leading to conflicts. Among the basic causes is the

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 105-109.

3. Churchill, at this time in the United States, had proposed an Anglo-American union as a balance of power to thwart Russian designs.

continuance of imperialist control and colonialism. Another cause is the monopolist control of important raw materials. It is obvious today that a conflict might be caused by the desire of powers to control colonial positions called the lifelines of an empire and to grab regions which may have important raw materials.

Q: What do you think of Mr. Bevin's foreign policy?<sup>4</sup>

JN: While we realise that the temper of the British people has changed greatly in recent years and that this had been reflected in the great Labour victory at the general election, the external policy of the British Government has been singularly like that of the previous Government, both in Europe and in South East Asia. This has led us to consider their Indian policy in this context. Indian public opinion has been definitely opposed to this foreign policy and has bitterly resented the Indonesia policy. Again, the measures taken by the South African Government against Indians<sup>5</sup> have not only angered India but have also made it perfectly clear that India can have no place in the association of nations which encourages racial policy similar to that of the Nazism.

Q: Would you wish to give any message for friends on the left in Britain as to the way in which they can best help India today?

JN: An important suggestion for friends in Britain is that they must see the need for the transfer of power from British authority to a representative Indian government. Once this is clearly decided all other questions can and will be settled by Indians themselves. We want freedom to deal with all our problems, which are merely complicated and aggravated by outside interference. I should like friends abroad to realise this basic nature of the problem and not be confused by secondary issues, however important they may appear to be.

4. On 13 April 1946, Ernest Bevin, the British Foreign Secretary, said that the empire would survive and he was sure that it had an extraordinary mission to fulfil. The empire, according to him, was a strange phenomenon — it was an institution.
5. The Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill restricted the franchise of Indians, provided 'representation' of Indians in the Assembly by three Europeans and in the Senate by two Europeans and restricted land tenure by Indians to prescribed areas.



## 8. The Proposal for a Plebiscite<sup>1</sup>

My own view is that a separate Muslim nation, to be created out of north-east and north-west India, is an absurd and fantastic idea. However, it is for the people themselves to decide. I do not want to compel these people to be part of a united India if they do not want it. I suggest that a plebiscite should be held after the removal of British troops and the British authority from India. I am convinced that, when they know the full facts, the Muslims will not want to leave us. If they decide to go out, I will let them function as they want. But they will soon realise that they cannot function separately for long, and they will return.

In the North West Frontier Province, the people, though predominantly Muslim, have voted for the Congress Party.<sup>2</sup> They have shown by a huge majority that they are opposed to a separate Pakistan state. Any suggestion<sup>3</sup> that the recent elections there were unfair to the Muslim League is just fantastic. It is in fact, the other way. Assam also is obviously opposed to Pakistan. The whole of the southern Punjab, which is predominantly non-Muslim, is opposed to it. The whole of western Bengal, that is, the industrial area including Calcutta, is predominantly non-Muslim. Every non-Muslim is opposed to the division of India. Thus, even on the principle of self-determination to which the Muslim League appeals, four important areas, which Mr. Jinnah claims — the Frontier Province, Assam, west Bengal and southern Punjab — cannot form part of Pakistan.<sup>4</sup>

Mr. Jinnah's attitude is peculiar. On the one hand, he claims self-determination and then says the result of self-determination would give him too small and weak a state; therefore, on the other hand, he demands

1. Interview to the B.B.C.'s special correspondent who sought Jawaharlal's views on a proposal for a plebiscite in north-east and north-west India, Delhi, 6 April 1946. From *The Hindu*, 10 April 1946.
2. The provincial elections in the North West Frontier Province had been fought specifically on the issue of partition and the electorate had given its clear verdict against it.
3. On 3 April 1946, Jinnah said: "The elections were not free. The caretaker government in power in the North West Frontier Province abused its powers, and was helped by the fact that so many of the voters are illiterate."
4. There were non-Muslim majorities both in the Punjab and Bengal, and in Assam the populations of the respective communities were 6,762,254 non-Muslims and 3,442,479 Muslims.

that Pakistan should have added to it other huge areas to make it a viable state — areas which do not want to be part of a separate state.

In Mr. Jinnah's proposal for Pakistan, about a third of the population would be non-Muslim. How could they rely on the loyalty of these enormous alien populations in case of defence against a foreign attack?

Question: What about the Muslim minorities in the Hindu areas? What plans do you have for them?

Jawaharlal Nehru: We shall do our utmost to remove all fears from the minds of the Muslim minority. Their economic position has been safeguarded in the plans drawn up by the National Planning Committee of the Congress Party. We are committed to the protection of all minorities.

I am convinced that Muslims and Hindus can live together with goodwill in a free united India. I am sorry that Mr. Jinnah's gospel has been a gospel of hatred based on religious differences and medieval nationalism. This is not the way by which goodwill can be created. The Hindus and the Muslims live together in almost every village. You cannot separate them. Mr. Jinnah, for the last nine years, has refused to discuss any proposal with us until we recognise him as the sole representative of the Muslims in India. Nobody is the sole representative of anybody on earth.

Q: Would you say something about your economic plans for India?

JN: Yes. The real problems of India are economic. We have plans to get rid of the appalling poverty and to raise the standard of living. We intend to end the present feudal landlord system. We shall experiment with cooperative and collective farms, at the same time leaving peasant proprietorship in large areas. We want the goodwill of the peasantry and their consent.

As to industries we want to develop this sector in a very big way all over the country. Mineral resources, communications, waterways, defence and key industries will be state-owned or state-controlled. Small industries will remain free, but subject to a measure of state-control.

Q: Would India use foreign capital?

JN: Yes. For the sake of rapid industrialisation we would welcome foreign capital, but definitely on the understanding that it does not involve foreign control. We would rather do without foreign capital if

any foreign control is to be imposed. I am sure a mutually satisfactory arrangement will be possible.

Q: What is your opinion on the problem of India's rapid growth of population?

JN: It is desirable to limit the growth of population and I favour suitable birth control methods. But it should be remembered that this population bogey has been overdone. India's population is still less dense than that of great parts of Europe, and there are large areas in India still uncultivated and unoccupied. The population which is not big for a purely agricultural country like India will not be big if that becomes partly industrialised. We think we can find productive work for all of India's millions. In the meantime, some birth control clinics have to be established in various industrial centres.

Q: What are your plans for India's defence?

JN: A free India will be intensely interested in defending its freedom. While working for peace on the international plane, we shall, until there is an international order, use normal means of armed defence. The armed forces must be of the latest type. India will defend itself to the utmost of its capacity against aggression. India desires to co-operate fully with the United Nations Organisation. We are convinced that the world must be treated more and more as one unified area. We shall gladly surrender to a world organisation, in common with other nations, any special rights which normally belong to an independent nation.

India will draw closer to her neighbours in Asia — have friendly relations with Russia, of course,— but I mean particularly China, South East Asia and West Asia.

As to our relationship with Britain, the last 200 years have naturally caused bitterness, but when India is free we shall try to forget the past and develop friendship with Britain.

It is too early to say much about the present conversations with the British Cabinet Mission.<sup>5</sup> They are eager to find a solution, but there

5. For the first three weeks after their arrival on 24 March 1946, the Cabinet Mission Ministers held exploratory talks with representative Indians belonging to all groups and parties. But these talks led nowhere as all discussion was overshadowed by the clash between the Congress insistence on a united India and the Muslim League demand for Pakistan. On 17 April 1946, the Cabinet Mission left Delhi for a brief rest in Kashmir. When they returned on 24 April 1946 they entered upon a period of intensive consultation with the Congress and League leaders.

are forces at work trying to limit freedom. Any limitation would lead to continued hostility. Half-measures will only irritate. The future of India lies in a federation of willing units with full autonomy. I hope all of us will share the widespread desire to solve the Indian problem, not merely of getting over the present difficulty for the time being but for the future.

## 9. The Basic Problem of Defence<sup>1</sup>

Question: The New Delhi correspondent of *The Times* of London has reported<sup>2</sup> that the Congress would allow the Muslims to have their own way in areas where they are in a majority as it was not possible to hold a united India. Can you clarify this?

Jawaharlal Nehru: What the correspondent of the London *Times* says is misleading and does not present correctly the Congress position.

One of the fundamental problems of India is the need of defence both from the national and the international point of view. This is not a point which depends on the Congress liking this or the Muslim League liking that. This is a basic problem, regardless of our wishes. Therefore, in any arrangement, defence, with its allied subjects, must be common. This calls for a strong centre holding charge of defence. Other subjects can be handed over to the provinces. It is with a view to getting over this difficulty that the Congress has suggested a minimum compulsory list of common subjects and an optional list. We cannot afford to have a weak centre for the essential common subjects. What *The Times* correspondent says therefore is misleading. It is true that we desire no coercion of any group, as far as it can be avoided, so that each area and group in India should have the feeling of freedom, and work out its own destiny within the large group. The question of destiny itself will be hedged and circumscribed and at the mercy of others, if defence is weak.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 9 April 1946. From *The Hindu*, 10 April 1946.
2. "Influential members of the Congress are beginning to think that it is perhaps better to let the Muslims go their own way in areas, where they are in a majority, rather than keep them within a united India at the cost of having a centre that perhaps could not hold even Hindu India together." Despatch from Delhi, 4 April 1946.

**Q:** What is your comment on the suggestion that there may be two federations in India joined together with a confederation at the top?<sup>3</sup>

**JN:** It is full of dangerous implications. Confederations never had any stability and they resulted in either leading to a closer federation or in a break leading to a civil war. The confederal centre is usually weak and has always to suffer pulls from different directions. Defence, etc., under such a centre will inevitably be weak. Thus both from security and other points of view, the suggestion is no solution, but merely an attempt to postpone the finding of a solution.

3. This proposal was reported to have emanated from official sources as a solution for the political deadlock.

## **10. A New Page in History<sup>1</sup>**

I am distressed that there are some people in the country who raise threats of civil war at this critical juncture when crores of other people are about to turn a new page in their history. It is not that I am afraid of these threats. If there is any disorder or unrest, we have to face it. If we do not face it with resoluteness, it will result in the rule of the hooligans. Who can say that there will be no suffering and travail which we have to pass through to reach our cherished goal of freedom? I only wish that the people, who think in terms of bloodshed and civil war, will get out of the mental rut in which they have got, and broaden their outlook.

Big questions are facing us at present. Revolutionary changes are in the offing. Nobody can say what will be India's future in two months. One thing, however, is certain. The old chapter of India's history is now closed and we have to turn a new page. In the shaping of the new India, not only the leaders, but millions of common people will also make their contributions.

Issues of secondary importance are being raised by some people at the moment, when the main question of independence is to be settled. Such attempts are meant to sidetrack the main issue. People who raise these

1. Address to Namdhari Sikhs, Delhi, 15 April 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 16 April 1946.

questions are not advancing the cause of freedom. They have first to end foreign rule. The British Government cannot solve any of our problems.<sup>2</sup>

2. At this meeting a resolution was passed that the Namdhari Sikhs would support the Congress to win freedom for a united India.

## **11. Note on Talks with the Cabinet Mission<sup>1</sup>**

I had dinner with all three and afterwards a talk lasting two hours. The talk was informal and yet, because all three were present, there was a touch of restraint and formality about it which might have been absent if only one of them had been present. No specific scheme was put forward, only various suggestions were thrown out. Yet it seemed to me that some kind of a scheme had taken shape in their minds. This appeared to me something as follows:

1. Defence and allied subjects (the minimum compulsory common subjects proposed by the Congress) must be dealt with by a central authority in India.
2. Subject to the above, everything should be done to "save the face" of Jinnah. The scheme should be a reasonable one, that is a workable one, and it is not desirable to drive Jinnah & Co. into an impossible corner from which there is no easy escape. Thus to say that Bengal and Punjab should be divided on the communal basis, and only the Muslim majority areas should be allowed to vote themselves out is not a reasonable proposition — because this leaves a truncated area which cannot easily function and at the same time it may result in their cutting away completely and endangering defence &c. As far as possible the Punjab and Bengal should be kept intact. A kind of Pakistan should be conceded or at least made possible, subject to the minimum subjects under the central authority.
3. The minimum compulsory subjects for the Centre should be determined, as well as the optional central subjects. Each province to be asked to accept the former — indeed it will be expected to do so anyhow. Then each province to declare with which area it wants to cooperate for the optional subjects. Thus two areas might develop —

1. Delhi, 10 April 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.I..

the Hindustan area and the Pakistan area. In each of these the provinces concerned would form a kind of sub-federation, if they so choose, for the optional common subjects. It is not necessary for the provinces (or States) so adhering together to be contiguous.

4. The Centre will be a kind of super federation dealing only with the compulsory common subjects. It might deal directly with the two sub-federations or with the provinces. Probably the former will be preferable.

5. The Centre might only be an executive by all the provinces. Or it might be also some kind of a legislative assembly elected indirectly by the provincial assembly. Any direct election would be far too cumbersome and difficult.

6. The States must also accept the compulsory common subjects. They may join either of the two sub-federations regardless of their geographical position.

7. In dealing with the States, normally only the present State governments can be formally consulted. It may be possible however to make some other arrangements also in regard to making the voice of the States peoples heard. This is worthy of consideration but for the present the State governments only count. The question of the internal government of the States need not be decided now though emphasis should be laid on required reforms. This question does not rise now and it is not possible for the Cabinet trio to go further into it. Circumstances will compel the rulers to change. Some time should be allowed for this change and adaptation to take place. The British Government's paramountcy &c. will disappear anyhow and the States will have to fit into the new picture.

Most of the talking was done by Stafford Cripps.

## 12. To S. Zainulabedin<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
19 April 1946

Dear Mr. Zainulabedin,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter of the 18th April. As I told you the Congress resolution on fundamental rights is perfectly clear on the point. This resolution has been repeated many times and was recently incorporated in the

1. A copy of this letter is in the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.

2. A Congressman of Delhi.

Congress election manifesto. It lays down that it is a fundamental right of every citizen to have freedom of conscience and freedom to profess and practise his religion subject to public order and morality. I have no doubt that this includes, and must include, the rights of propagating one's religion and of conversion. In any country, and more especially in India, where almost all the well-known religions flourish, it is essential that there should be this freedom of religion and inevitably this includes the right to bring others to one's own viewpoint. As you know in the past objection has been taken to children and minors being unduly influenced before they are ripe to consider vital matters of this kind, but apart from this and apart from public order and morality there seems to me to be no other difficulty in dealing with this matter. The freedom to practise one's religion and to propagate it necessarily includes the freedom not to practise a religion and to propagate such views also. Sometimes even when a right is recognised and acknowledged two such rights may come into conflict and lead to a possibility of a disturbance of the public order. The situation has then to be dealt with in a way so as to avoid conflict and disorder and yet to maintain the rights so far as possible. I do not see how any modern state can follow a different policy. All religious communities are entitled to the fullest freedom to practise and profess their beliefs. The Congress has always stood for this, and what is more, modern conditions necessitate it. I do not see any necessity for the Congress to issue any further declaration on the subject. I am not aware of any constitution which goes beyond the declarations already made by the Congress in regard to freedom of conscience and freedom to profess and practise one's religion. In any event no individual Congressman can vary or add to the resolutions of the Congress. Only the Congress itself can do so when it meets in full session. In the present case, as I have said, I do not myself have any doubt and the declaration already made seems to me adequate.

Yours truly,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



### 13. The Congress Reply to the Cabinet Mission's Invitation<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27 April 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

I have just received your letter<sup>2</sup> of date for which thanks.

On behalf of the Congress, I have two comments to make. In your letter you say: "A Union Government dealing with the following subjects:- foreign affairs, defence and communications. There will be two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim provinces, dealing with all other subjects which the provinces in the respective groups desire to be dealt with in common. The provincial governments will deal with all other subjects and will have all the residuary sovereign rights."

The Congress has never accepted the division of India into predominantly Hindu and predominantly Muslim provinces. It however recognises that there may be provinces which are willing to delegate to the Central Government subjects in the optional list, while others may agree to delegate only compulsory subjects like foreign affairs, defence and communications.

The Congress has agreed that residuary powers are to vest in the provinces, but the use of the term "sovereign" in that connection would tend to cause misunderstanding. I would, therefore, request that the word may be taken out.

1. Letter, drafted by Jawaharlal, of A.K. Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 353.
2. Pethick-Lawrence invited to a conference at Simla Maulana Azad and three other Congress representatives saying that the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy had realised that "it would be useless to ask the two parties to meet unless they were able to place before them a basis of negotiation" which could lead to an agreement. The Simla Conference was to consider whether agreement was possible on the basis of the following principles: (i) Establishment of Indian union with three Central subjects—defence, foreign affairs and communications; (ii) all other subjects and residuary sovereign rights vested in provincial units; (iii) Creation of two groups of provincial units, one group consisting of predominantly Hindu provinces and the other group consisting of predominantly Muslim provinces; (iv) These two groups of provinces to decide by agreement among themselves what other subjects may be placed under the Indian union; (v) Indian States to be given the option of fitting themselves into this scheme in any manner they liked. The Congress was represented by A.K. Azad, Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel and Abdul Ghaffar Khan. The Muslim League was represented by Jinnah, Liaquat Ali Khan, Nawab Ismail and Abdur Rab Nishtar.

If these two small verbal changes are made, I shall place the proposal before the Congress Working Committee and have every hope that the invitation will be accepted.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

#### 14. Acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's Invitation<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
28 April 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

I thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of April 27. I have consulted my colleagues of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the suggestion made by you, and they desire me to inform you that they have always been willing to discuss fully any matters concerning the future of India with representatives of the Muslim League or any other organisation. I must point out, however, that the "fundamental principles" which you mention require amplification and elucidation in order to avoid any misunderstanding.

As you are aware, we have envisaged a federal union of autonomous units. Such a federal union must of necessity deal with certain essential subjects of which defence and its allied subjects are the most important. It must be organic and must have both an executive and legislative machinery as well as the finance relating to these subjects and the power to raise revenues for these purposes in its own right. Without these functions and powers it would be weak and disjointed and defence and progress in general would suffer. Thus among the common subjects, in addition to foreign affairs, defence and communications, there should be currency, customs, tariffs and such other subjects as may be found on closer scrutiny to be intimately allied to them.

Your reference to two groups of provinces, the one of the predominantly Hindu provinces and the other of the predominantly Muslim

1. Letter, drafted by Jawaharlal, of A.K. Azad to Lord Pethick-Lawrence. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 357-358.
2. "... My letter to you was in identical terms with one sent to Mr. Jinnah... It is not possible for me to make any textual alterations... These terms are our proposed basis... What we are asking the Congress Working Committee to do is to agree to send its representatives to the Conference..."

provinces, is not clear. The only predominantly Muslim provinces are the North West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan. Bengal and Punjab have a bare Muslim majority. We consider it wrong to form groups of provinces under the federal union and more so on a religious or communal basis. It also appears that you leave no choice to a province in the matter of joining or not joining a group. It is by no means certain that a province as constituted would like to join any particular group. In any event it would be wholly wrong to compel a province to function against its own wish. While we agree to the provinces having full powers in regard to all remaining subjects as well as the residuary powers, we have also stated that it should be open to any province to exercise its option to have more common subjects with the federal union. Any sub-federation within the federal union would weaken the federal centre and would be otherwise wrong. We do not, therefore, favour any such development.

Regarding the Indian States we should like to make it clear that we consider it essential that they should be parts of the federal union in regard to the common subjects mentioned above. The manner of their coming into the union can be considered fully later.

You have referred to certain "fundamental principles" but there is no mention of the basic issue before us, that is, Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India. It is only on this basis that we can discuss the future of India, or any interim arrangement.

While we are ready to carry on negotiations with any party as to the future of India, we must state our convictions that reality will be absent from any negotiations whilst an outside ruling power still exists in India.

I have asked three of my colleagues of the Congress Working Committee, namely Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan to accompany me in any negotiations that may take place as a result of your suggestion.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

3. In his reply dated 29 April 1946, Pethick-Lawrence stated that "we have never contemplated the acceptance by the Congress and the Muslim League of our invitation would mean a preliminary condition of full approval by them of the terms set out in my letter."



## **THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER**

### **II. The Simla Conference**



## 1. Record of First Meeting<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State after welcoming the party representatives said that the purpose of the conference was to make a final attempt to reach agreement between the parties. The basis of discussion was the form of solution given in his letter of invitation and the object was to clothe these bare bones with flesh and to see whether the result could be made acceptable. In the light of the discussions the delegation had had with all parties this seemed to them the most hopeful approach.

The delegation considered that there must be some form of central union for India to deal with certain compulsory subjects, but they thought that some system of grouping of provinces provided the best hope of solving the communal problem. They had examined the alternative<sup>2</sup> put forward by the Congress of one federal Centre with compulsory and optional subjects, but it seemed to them impracticable. He thought that it might be taken for granted that everyone present was fully acquainted with one another's views and with the difference between them. If the parties were not satisfied as to the sincerity of the delegation's purpose no words would now convince them and the importance of reaching an agreement was so self-evident that there was no need to enlarge upon it. He proposed that the discussions should centre round the basis put forward in his letter of invitation and that the Conference should work as far as possible to a time table and upon a definite agenda which would be laid before the meeting....

Maulana Azad said that before the matters on the agenda were discussed the basic position of the Congress must be made clear, which was that they were proceeding on the basis of complete independence for India. The Secretary of State said that the delegation were here to set up constitution-making machinery to create a constitution under which India would be independent if that was the wish of the Indian people...

Discussion then took place on the union subjects. The Viceroy explained that it was proposed that these should be defence, foreign affairs and communications as a minimum. The Congress representatives

1. The second Simla Conference, as it came to be known, met from 5 May to 12 May 1946. Extracts of the official report of the first meeting held on 5 May 1946 (forenoon). From *The Transfer of Power 1942-47*, Vol. VII, pp. 425-428. Only such portions as show or are relevant to, Jawaharlal's contributions to the discussions have been printed.

2. See *ante*, pp. 138-139.

said that in their view certain ancillary subjects must necessarily go with these and that the Centre must be self-sufficient in its own right in regard to finance and have under its control the ancillary subjects essential for this purpose. It would require close analysis to work out which of the existing subjects this would cover, but there might be subjects in the present list which were not necessary. They thought that direct sources of revenue were essential and that it would not be satisfactory for the Centre to be financed by contributions from the units...

Sir S. Cripps pointed out that there would be a third party to the union, namely, the Indian States, and the Secretary of State said that the union government would be dependent on and formed by the groups unless there was direct election to the union legislature. If it was indirectly based in this way it did not seem to be necessary to give the federations the power which Mr. Jinnah thought they should have. Mr. Jinnah said that his conception was that a minimum defence budget would be fixed by agreement between the groups after a review of defence expenditure for a past period of years. If more was required the union would prepare a budget of the additional amount and would have to request the groups for additional contributions...<sup>3</sup>

Pandit Nehru said that the discussion seemed to him to be proceeding on the basis of mistaken assumptions. Was there only to be an executive at the union level? If so, who was going to discuss defence or foreign affairs. If the groups could discuss and decide these matters they were not central subjects.

The Secretary of State said that all the topics on the agenda were inevitably interlocked and it seemed now desirable to turn to the question of the union constitution. This raised very large issues, for example, there was room for differences of opinion as to whether there should be a legislature and how it should be chosen...

The Secretary of State pointed out that in each of the three subjects contemplated for the union, policy questions would arise continuously from day to day....

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress considered that there was obvious difficulty in having a vague and airy Centre with no effective powers. Suppose that there were war or threat of war, it was inconceivable that there should be two or three separate forums for deciding what should be done. It was essential there should be a legislative forum at the

3. In fact the Congress was in favour of the power to levy taxes being given to the union. The Muslim League, on the other hand, had expressed itself in favour of levying contributions from the units.



5/5/46

7 afternoon

4 p.m.

P.L. acceptable

L.A. says joint basis of 2 bills only as a firm - for  
there. not any other purpose.

Grinch. Development of England (still inoffensive).

P.L. difficulties in using 2/3's suggestion...

Grinches & difficulties everywhere - in the nature of things.

and democracy rather (is much)  
are trying to examine proposal - not necessarily on basis.

Es. body put in charge of future affairs &  
this can be provided with finance.

(do not sure yet if this practical - an example of)

no finance required.

No money at all. Checks.

\* Council execution of 2/3 decisions - prior minutes.

very practical way

are prepared to examine this way.

? Policy

What about 'the Commonwealth'

S.C. We have no common policy basis

J. How they have it here. but this is cancelled

S.C. No good enough

Meaning It must be responsible to some one.

J. To the 2 groups.

V. Surely this goes well.

J. Anything else will mean a central federal body & at  
a union as central bodies.

— 2 —

Defence

P.L. no contemplated separate armies in joint scheme.

But one defence force.

J. says everything can be done in Government

Council - (if settled, behind, separate but co-operating)

H6.

6/5/46 Monday

P-6 "Ways & means being considered" - not assuming that all is good B

"French ?" - perhaps (How long will the Union last?)

No. 2. Groups

S.C. Idea arose for certain compulsory subjects to be set out by authority. If called, the provinces free to participate - for common optional subjects. This might be required - an arrangement to do this - common administration & common executive for such subjects as will be referred to Centre.



→ J.G.

French - It is quite clear - we cannot. It is not possible - No one could handle it. It has gone beyond all that.



Vs ?" K.J.

→ (What subjects in common in (university?)

Planning there 3 subjects for Centre - what will not be!

Remaining subjects in provinces

British Govt say transfer subjects to Province.

Both Ex & Leg in Govt control.

What subjects voluntary I cannot say.

If Congress & French began again that French province may group themselves together with their ex & leg (then later on) creating for thought.

Non-formal understanding involves recognition of for which emergency & kindred basis

49.

S.C. If we pumping - no Union!?

Centre and the necessary financial apparatus. It was true there must be checks all round but if it was all checks there would be no motive power. The Centre must be strong and efficient though it might be limited. There was otherwise a danger that foreign powers might intrigue with the groups. Naturally, if the Centre adopted policies which offended the groups there would be trouble and that would be contrary to the interest of the Centre. Pandit Nehru's personal view was that there should be a directly elected central legislature but to meet the anxieties of certain people there might be a second chamber indirectly elected. This would provide the check to which Mr. Jinnah and Sir S. Cripps had referred.

The Viceroy said that the executive would presumably be small. It might be reasonable for it to be appointed for a term of years as in the Swiss system and not responsible from day to day.

Pandit Nehru said that India was accustomed to the parliamentary system but a permanent executive of this sort might be considered. He thought there was danger of it being inactive as a result of internal disagreement. The central executive might not be so small as was expected.

The Secretary of State pointed out that if there were direct election there would be enormous constituencies unless the legislature were very large. The subject-matter of the Centre would not be appropriate for electioneering and indirect election from the groups would seem a more manageable arrangement.

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress had not reached any definite conclusion about this. There might be indirect election at some lower stage, e.g., in the village...

## 2. Record of Second Meeting<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State said the discussion might be resumed on the point about the relationship between the groups and the union in the absence of a union legislature...

1. 5 May 1946 (afternoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 429-431.

The Secretary of State said that the Centre would be functioning in a very limited field, but in the case, for instance, of defence, there must be someone responsible for the common army and he must have a popular mandate. How could he be responsible to two different legislatures that might have different policies?

Mr. Jinnah said the executive could settle all these matters and he was definitely against a union legislature.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Maulana Azad said that this was a matter for the constitution-making body. If any abnormal provisions were required, they should be suggested by those who wanted them. The Centre must be capable of functioning...

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Congress did not want the States to be a separate group. They should be dealt with like the provinces. A large State might come straight into the union; others might form their own groups and join the union as such. Others would be absorbed in larger States or in provinces. In any case there must inevitably be States representatives in the union. The Congress did not want a "rajasthan" because the States units must be associated together in groups on administrative grounds and not simply on political grounds. The problem of the States was really that of the dozen or score of big States...

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the proportions in which the groups were represented would need careful consideration. Everyone should be treated alike.

His Excellency pointed out, however, that some allowance must be made for the abnormal features of the Indian position.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the Congress hoped that the States would approximate internally as well as externally to the character of the provinces.

His Excellency pointed out that this would take time.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed and said that if it took too long, there might be a lot of trouble.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed with the Viceroy that a union court would be necessary. It would deal with disputes between the units, and might also deal with the fundamental rights as included in the constitution.

Mr. Jinnah said that on the assumption which seemed to be made that there would be no communal trouble once the union was set up, there was no need of a court.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that since the constitution would be a written one, there must be a tribunal to decide, for instance, disputes about the jurisdiction of the Centre and the groups.

### 3. A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
6 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading up to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not deceive ourselves, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28th.<sup>2</sup> We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. We realise that some assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which ignore or run contrary to fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.

In my letter of April 28th, I stated that the basic issue before us was that of Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India, for there can be no independence so long as there is a foreign army on Indian soil. We stand for the independence of the whole of India now and not in the distant or near future. Other matters are subsidiary to this and can be fitly discussed and decided by the constituent assembly.

At the conference yesterday I referred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the conference, accepted Indian independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the constituent assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now, and that is the acceptance of Indian independence now.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 433-434.

2. See *ante*, pp. 138-139.

If that is so then certain consequences inevitably follow. We felt yesterday that there was no appreciation of these consequences. A constituent assembly is not going to decide the question of independence; that question must be and, we take it, has been decided now. That assembly will represent the will of the free Indian nation and give effect to it. It is not going to be bound by any previous arrangements. It has to be preceded by a provisional government which must function, as far as possible, as a government of free India, and which should undertake to make all arrangements for the transitional period.

In our discussions yesterday repeated references were made to groups of provinces functioning together, and it was even suggested that such a group would have an executive and legislative machinery. This method of grouping has not so far been discussed by us but still our talks seemed to presume all this. I should like to make it very clear that we are entirely opposed to any executive or legislative machinery for a group of provinces or units of the federation. That will mean a sub-federation, if not something more, and we have already told you that we do not accept this. It would result in creating three layers of executive and legislative bodies, an arrangement which will be cumbrous, static and disjointed, leading to continuous friction. We are not aware of any such arrangement in any country.

We are emphatically of opinion that it is not open to the conference to entertain any suggestions for a division of India. If this is to come, it should come through the constituent assembly free from any influence of the present governing power.

Another point we wish to make clear is that we do not accept the proposal for parity as between groups in regard to the executive or legislature. We realise that everything possible should be done to remove fears and suspicions from the mind of every group and community. But the way to do this is not by unreal methods which go against the basic principles of democracy on which we hope to build up our constitution.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

#### 4. Record of Third Meeting<sup>1</sup>

...In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that there was a clear distinction between the Congress plan of optional subjects and the proposal for the grouping of provinces. As soon as the executive machinery for the groups was set up, an unnecessary intermediate body was placed between the Centre and the provincial governments. The grouping scheme would not be efficient from the administrative point of view.

His Excellency said that the scheme was designed to get over a psychological difficulty. It was not claimed to be ideal from the administrative point of view.

The Secretary of State pointed out that there were certain difficulties in the Congress scheme of optional subjects. Part of the Central organization would deal with subjects for the whole of India; another part would deal with subjects entrusted to the Centre by certain provinces only. Part of the legislature would have loyalty to the whole of India; another part would be thinking only of certain provinces. The Government might be supported by the legislature on the compulsory subjects, but not on the optional subjects. The confusion in procedure would be so great that on practical grounds it seemed necessary for optional subjects to be dealt with elsewhere than in the union legislature.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that the provinces tended to hold on to power. One could not be sure that they would cede any authority to the groups until they had been consulted. Possibly an arrangement like that by which Scottish Bills in the British Parliament are referred to the Scottish members might be introduced. Industrialisation and progress were only possible on an all-India basis.

His Excellency said that one must face the fact that the main reason for the groups was to get over the communal difficulty and make it possible to call together a constitution-making body.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that in the view of the Congress the first thing was to dispose in practice of the problem of the Indo-British relationship. The communal problem could be dealt with afterwards. The constitution-making body would not bring compulsion on any unit.

In reply to Sir Stafford Cripps, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that

1. 6 May 1946 (forenoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 436-438.

though most points in the constitution-making body must be settled by the normal procedure, certain fundamental matters would not be decided by a majority. The Congress would not only exercise no compulsion on units to stay in the all-India federation. They would in addition see that the minorities were suitably safeguarded in the constitution. The Congress did not wish to encourage any tendencies towards splitting up India. The union of India, even if the list of subjects was short, must be strong and organic. Provinces would not be prevented from cooperating among themselves over such subjects as education and health; but they would not need a group executive. He appealed to the League to come into the constitution-making body on the assurance that there would be no compulsion.

Mr. Jinnah replied that he could not accept that invitation. But if the Congress and the Muslim League agreed that the Muslim provinces should group together and have their own legislature and executive, he had no doubt that there would be no difficulty at all. If the Congress would accept the groups, the Muslim League would accept the union subject to argument about the machinery of it.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru pointed out that Mr. Jinnah had accepted no feature of the union. The union without a legislature would be futile and entirely unacceptable. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that his position came near to that of Mr. Jinnah, but it was difficult for him to accept grouping because the decision must be made by the provinces.

Mr. Jinnah said that he would be very glad to sit together with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru for whom he had a great regard. He had no desire to ask the British to stay in India.

## 5. Record of Fourth Meeting<sup>1</sup>

The meeting considered item 3 on the agenda,<sup>2</sup> the constitution-making body.

1. 6 May 1946 (afternoon). Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 440-442.
2. Composition and functions in respect of union, groups and provinces of the constitution-making machinery.



Pandit Nehru said that the Congress recognised that their original proposal for a constitution-making body based on adult suffrage would cause delay and that therefore existing machinery must in some way be the basis. The Congress were not able to commit themselves definitely on the details but they envisaged some form of election by provincial legislatures. The States must come in on the same basis as British India, i.e., they must be represented by elected representatives of the people. The Congress could not assent to their being represented by nominees of the rulers. In the majority of States there was electoral machinery already in operation which could be utilised. On this assumption the States' representatives could participate on equal terms with those from British India and could sit even when provincial constitutions were being considered.

As regards functions, the Congress contemplated that the all-India constitution-making body would decide the union constitution and would also decide the main lines of provincial constitutions. They would prefer the maximum possible uniformity in provincial constitutions but details would have to be filled in by some provincial authority. They thought that provincial legislatures as at present constituted might undertake this. For example, the Congress as a matter of principle were opposed to two chambers and desired joint electorates. But these matters should be decided by the constitution-making body which might leave a latitude to provinces in regard to them where uniformity was not possible. It was not contemplated that the all-India constitution-making body should frame constitutions for the States.

Sir S. Cripps asked whether the Congress contemplated the representatives of a group of provinces in the all-India constitution-making body meeting separately for group purposes. Pandit Nehru said that the question of grouping would arise after the constitution had been formed. The first question to decide was the character of the union. After that provinces might exercise their autonomy subject to the union constitution and provincial representatives might bring up in the all-India constitution-making body proposals for grouping. It was not possible to say how the all-India constitution-making body would decide these matters. New forces would be operating when India received its independence and even the old political parties could not guarantee what action it would take. Sir S. Cripps said that the only way to secure that there was a grouping arrangement if that were desired would be to allow provinces to meet as a section of the constitution-making body and form a group. They might decide to do so either by vote of the provincial legislature or by vote of their representatives in the constitution-making body.

Pandit Nehru said that while the Congress contemplated autonomy for the provinces that meant internal autonomy, it was quite another thing for autonomy to be used to create the new piece of constitutional machinery going beyond the boundaries of the province. Some provinces might wish to group themselves and others might not. Others might be divided almost equally on the subject. But Sikhs and Hindus in the Punjab who were a large minority might be adverse to the Punjab being grouped with the north-western provinces.

The Viceroy said that it looked as if a constitution-making body with all parties cooperating in it would be impossible unless there were agreement beforehand that provinces should be accorded the right to group themselves. It was a choice of difficulties and unless grouping were agreed to there might be no constitution-making machinery based on agreement and the consequences would be grave.

Pandit Nehru said that if any province declined to come into the constitution-making body, the constitution-making body should proceed without it. He thought this was unlikely to happen but provinces and States which did stay out would be under great pressure to come in. The same applied to the States who would have to come in subject to considerable internal changes.

The Viceroy pointed out that if provinces stayed out the union of India would be lost.

Pandit Nehru said that the Congress would pay a big price to avoid that happening but there were limits. They believed that if the British Government decided to quit India not merely at some future date but now, a constituent assembly could be formed and would meet in a realistic situation in which the parties would come to terms. They would then have to face the consequences of their actions.

The Viceroy said that the "psychologies of the situation were realities and it seemed the path of prudence to make some compromise in advance of the constitution-making body which would avoid the risk of a disastrous conflict.

Maulana Azad said that there could be no guarantee that the recommendations of the Congress would be accepted by the constitution-making body, but Pandit Nehru accepted the suggestion of Sir S. Cripps that an agreement between the two main parties to use their influence to procure certain decisions by the constitution-making body would be of real value...

## 6. Notes on the Conference<sup>1</sup>

The recent talks in Viceregal Lodge disclose certain trends of thought in the minds of the parties concerned. It is desirable that these should be carefully analysed and considered. We have taken up a definite attitude in regard to certain fundamental problems, but we have seldom considered the various implications and consequences or the details of the problems that face us. The proper and logical course for us to take up would have been to insist on a decision on fundamentals before proceeding to discuss any details. In theory we have taken this up but in practice we have often been led to the discussion of what might be considered details though they are important enough. Indeed this is inevitable when any discussions take place, whether formal or informal. The only way to avoid it is to avoid the discussion itself. This difficulty has faced us especially during these similar parleys when we often proceeded on certain assumptions which we had not previously considered in all their bearings. Even apart from these assumptions we have not so far given much thought to the working out of constitutional arrangements in line with our own approach.

What is our present attitude? Firstly and basically that the British must hand over power and withdraw completely. Hand over power to whom? To our national government. That government should be really representative and preferably should be set up with the cooperation of other groups also. If that is not possible, power should be handed over to the Congress or, in the alternative, to the Muslim League. This national government will then see to the formation and working of a constituent assembly which will consider and decide all problems.

Even this attitude has not been clearly set down and worked out. There should have been a full discussion in the Working Committee and a blue-print drawn up, so that we knew exactly where we were in theory. In practice, owing to various opposing forces, something different might well emerge, but it would be enormously helpful to us to have that blue-print and to test every new proposal by it. Obviously the problems before us are of enormous complexity and a formal approach based on some principles does not go far enough. We are too much absorbed by the communal issue and ignore much else, yet both these act and react on each other.

1. Dated 7 May 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Thus the creation of a provisional government or interim government should be worked out fully in all its implications; so also the constituent assembly. How is the constituent assembly to be formed and should it function? How do States come in? Will the constituent assembly draw up only this all-India constitution or the details of the provincial constitution also — and States? We have no clear answers to these questions. A further complexity is introduced by the reference to 'grouping' of provinces.

During the period of the provisional government where do States stand?

These and many other questions arise and it is difficult to answer them authoritatively unless the Working Committee has considered them and laid down its policy in regard to them.

The present Simla Conference has assumed a certain importance in the eyes of India and the world. In a sense it is a turning-point in recent Indo-British discussions. As there is likely to be no kind of a settlement at this Conference, the obvious result is going to be that the British Government will proceed to give an imposed decision. One can vaguely see the outline of this already. The attitude we take up in the Conference in regard not only to fundamentals but also other matters is important as it may have some bearing on results. And yet we have little guidance from the Working Committee on these matters. Subsequent developments are likely to be rapid.

1. The picture as in the mind of the Cabinet Delegation:

(i) An all-India union comprising all the provinces and States dealing with certain minimum common subjects, such as, foreign affairs, defence, communications. Also the power directly to raise moneys for these subjects. Presumably this will include currency and customs & no more. A union executive & legislature. The latter to be chosen by the provincial legislature (States?). Probably parity in the legislative and executive as between the two groups. If there is the third group, the States, then the proportion to be 5:5:3.

(ii) Provincial autonomy in regard to all other subjects — residuary powers. In a sense provinces & States sovereign, subject to the States powers of the Centre.

(iii) Provinces (and States) to be given the option of grouping themselves together for such subjects as they may choose. Such a group to have an executive (and probably also a legislature, though this is not clear).

(iv) Not clear whether the union will deal only with the groups or also with the units. Probably with both. It is quite possible that some provinces may not choose to group themselves.

(v) The constituent assembly to be formed by indirect election through present provincial legislatures, either by single transferable vote or some other form of proportional representation or communal groups voting separately.

This constituent assembly, after discussing common problems, to split up into groups to consider & decide group structures. Thus the C.A. functions both as a single assembly and as two or more C.A.s.

Question of States — Probably to be left out. Subsequent treaties or arrangements.

## 2. Picture as in the mind of Muslim League:

(i) All India union of all provinces (States not considered) dealing with foreign affairs, defence & communications. Only an executive—no legislature. (Who appoints executive? The group executives?) No power to raise money. Money to be voted for it by group executives & legislatures. Essentially the union executive will be agents of the groups.

(ii) Groups—executive & legislature question: optional or compulsory?  
(iii) Provinces

Evidently groups are the most important part of this structure and the union will be weak & ineffective.

States — Where do they come in

- (i) Provisional or interim government
- (ii) Constituent assembly
- (iii) Grouping to form units for federation
- (iv) Merger
- (v) Internal structure
- (vi) Basic qualifications to join constituent assembly & union
- (vii) Pol. Dept. & Pol. Adviser

Change of constitution——method

Question of secession later

Supreme Court

## Questions for us:

1. If Centre real, strong, organic with Ex. & Leg.—can we permit grouping of Prov. Say without Legs. &c.

Centre: Organic with full authority in regard to subjects given to it—also with power to remedial action in case of breakdown of constitution, gross maladministration, or grave public emergencies—famine, epidemic &c.

Sovereign democratic legislature & responsible executive.

## 7. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
8 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am sending you a small pamphlet<sup>2</sup> giving the results of the recent elections in the North West Frontier Province. At page 9 you will find the voting figures given. Out of the total Muslim votes cast the Congress and Nationalist Muslim candidates got 208,896 votes, and the Muslim League candidates got 147,880 votes.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Not printed.

## 8. A.K. Azad's Letter to Pethick-Lawrence<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
9 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

My colleagues and I have given the most careful consideration to the memorandum<sup>2</sup> sent by you yesterday suggesting various points of agreement. On the 28th April I sent you a letter in which I explained briefly the Congress viewpoint in regard to certain "fundamental principles" mentioned in your letter of 27th April. After the first day of the conference, on May 6th, I wrote to you again to avoid any possible misunderstanding regarding the issues being discussed in the conference.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 476-479. This is the final draft containing changes made by Mahatma Gandhi. The first draft in Jawaharlal's hand is available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. The differences between the two drafts are indicated in footnotes.
2. After the Simla Conference had sat for two days the Cabinet Mission sent the parties a document containing suggested points for agreement. This elaborated the constitutional structure in three tiers—union, groups and provinces—envisaged in the letter of invitation sent by Pethick-Lawrence to Azad and Jinnah on 27 April 1946.

I now find from your memorandum that some of your suggestions are entirely opposed to our views and to the views repeatedly declared by the Congress. We are thus placed in a difficult position. It has been and is our desire to explore every avenue for a settlement and a changeover in India by consent, and for this purpose we are prepared to go far. But there are obvious limits beyond which we cannot go if we are convinced that this would be injurious to the people of India and to India's progress as a free nation.<sup>3</sup>

In my previous letters I have laid stress on the necessity of having a strong and organic federal union. I have also stated that we do not approve of sub-federations or grouping of provinces in the manner suggested, and are wholly opposed to parity in executives or legislatures as between wholly unequal groups. We do not wish to come in the way of provinces or other units cooperating together, if they so choose, but this must be entirely optional.

The proposals you have put forward are meant, we presume, to limit the free discretion of the constituent assembly. We do not see how this can be done. We are at present concerned with one important aspect of a larger problem. Any decision on this aspect taken now might well conflict with the decisions we, or the constituent assembly, might want to take on other aspects. The only reasonable course it appears to us is to have a constituent assembly with perfect freedom to draw up its constitution, with certain reservations to protect the rights of minorities. Thus we may agree that any major communal issue must be settled by consent of the parties concerned, or, where such consent is not obtained, by arbitration.<sup>4</sup>

3. One paragraph is omitted; Nor can we, as representatives of the Congress, ignore or override the clear directions of the Congress. It is certainly open to us to make any recommendations to the All India Congress Committee. But we can only do so if we are ourselves convinced of the desirability of these recommendations in the present circumstances and the possibility of their acceptance. We have also to bear in mind the interests of other minorities and groups, notably the Sikhs, who are not represented in the conference.

4. Two paragraphs are omitted: We are prepared to extend the principle of arbitration further to avoid any semblance of compulsion of a minority on particular issues affecting it. But while we have to avoid the compulsion of a minority, we must necessarily also avoid the compulsion of a majority by a minority.

There should be a final safeguard. When the constitution has been framed by the constituent assembly it should be sent for notification to each provincial assembly. It will be open to the province not to ratify and thus to opt itself out of it. If it does so then the problems in relation to the province will have to be considered anew. This gives the largest freedom and self-determination to each province and at the same time enables a balanced constitution to be drawn up with the consent of all parties concerned.

From the proposals you have sent us (8-D.E.F.G.)<sup>5</sup> it would appear that two or three separate constitutions might emerge for separate groups, joined together by a flimsy common superstructure left to the mercy of the three disjointed groups.<sup>6</sup>

There is also compulsion in the early stages for a province to join a particular group whether it wants to or not.<sup>7</sup> Thus why should the Frontier Province, which is clearly a Congress province, be compelled to join any group hostile to the Congress?

We realise that in dealing with human beings, as individuals or groups, many considerations have to be borne in mind besides logic and reason. But logic and reason cannot be ignored altogether, and unreason and injustice are dangerous companions at any time and, more especially, when we are building for the future of hundreds of millions of human beings.

I shall now deal with some of the points in your memorandum and make some suggestions in regard to them.

No. 1.<sup>8</sup> — We note that you have provided for the finance it requires for the subjects it deals with. We think it should be clearly stated that the federal union must have power to raise revenue in its own right. Further that currency and customs must in any event be included in the union subjects, as well as such other subjects as on closer scrutiny may be found to be intimately allied to them. One other subject is an essential and inevitable union subject and that is planning. Planning can

5. These clauses of Point 8 of the list of points of agreement set out the constitution-making procedure. After preliminary business the constituent assembly would divide into three sections, representing respectively the Hindu-majority and Muslim-majority provinces and the States. Each of the first two sections would decide on provincial constitutions, and, if they wished, a group constitution. Provinces might then opt out of groups. Thereafter the three sections would join to frame a union constitution, provided that any major point affecting the communal issue must be voted by a separate majority of each of the two major communities.
6. Here one paragraph is deleted: 'The process of constitution-making begins from below and might well proceed in conflicting directions without any uniformity. It might even be difficult, during the later stages, to erect an organic, workable structure for the union centre. This procedure is bound to lead to all manner of difficulties and conflicts, and to a disjointed constitution.'
7. This sentence replaced the following sentence in the first draft: 'At a later stage it may opt out of that group but the previous compulsion can have no justification.'
8. Point 1 of the list was that there should be an all-India union government and legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communication, fundamental rights and having necessary powers of finance. All remaining powers should vest in the provinces (Point 2).



only be done effectively at the Centre, though the provinces or units will give effect to it in their respective areas.

The union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

Nos. 5 and 6<sup>9</sup>— We are entirely opposed to the proposed parity, both in the executive and legislature, as between wholly unequal groups. This is unfair and will lead to trouble. Such a provision contains in itself the seed of conflict and the destruction of free growth. If there is no agreement on this or any similar matter, we are prepared to leave it to arbitration.

No 7<sup>10</sup> — We are prepared to accept the suggestion that provision be made for a reconsideration of the constitution after ten years. Indeed the constitution will necessarily provide the machinery for its revision at any time.

The second clause lays down that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the constituent assembly. This present provision is intended to meet an emergency. We expect that the constitution for India will be based on adult suffrage. Ten years hence India is not likely to be satisfied with anything less than adult suffrage to express its mind on all grave issues.<sup>11</sup>

No. 8-A<sup>12</sup> — We would suggest that the just and proper method of elections, fair to all parties, is the method of proportional representation by single transferable vote.<sup>13</sup> It might be remembered that the present basis of election for the provincial assemblies is strongly weighted in favour of the minorities.

The proportion of 1/10th appears to be too small and will limit the numbers of the constituent assembly too much. Probably the number

9. Point 5 was that the legislature of the union should have parity of representation between the Muslim-majority and the Hindu-majority provinces, whether grouped or not, together with representatives (unspecified) of the States. Point 6 stipulated that the union government would be constituted in the same proportion.
10. Point 7 allowed reconsideration of the constitution at ten-yearly intervals.
11. This paragraph in the first draft read: The second clause to the effect that reconsideration should be done by a body constituted on the same basis as the constituent assembly, and with the same provisions as to voting, may create difficulties as it may not fit in with the constitution. We are, however, agreeable to the principle underlying this, but in any event we would like to have adult suffrage.
12. According to this clause of Point 8 the constituent assembly should mirror the party strengths in the provincial assemblies, with representatives of States by ratio of their populations.
13. "As suggested in the memorandum, it will be difficult to fit in every group of independents"—deleted from the first draft.

would not exceed 200. In the vitally important tasks the assembly will have to face, it should have larger numbers. We suggest that at least one-fifth of the total membership of the provincial assemblies should be elected for the constituent assembly.

No. 8-B.<sup>14</sup> — This clause is vague and requires elucidation. But for the present we are not going into further details.

No. 8-D.E.F.G. — I have already referred to these clauses. We think that both the formation of these groups and the procedure suggested are wrong and undesirable. We do not wish to rule out the formation of groups if the provinces so desire. But this subject must be left open for decision by the constituent assembly. The drafting and settling of the constitution should begin with the federal union. This should contain common and uniform provisions for the provinces and other units. The provinces may then add to these.

No. 8-H.<sup>15</sup> — In the circumstances existing today we are prepared to accept some such clause. In case of disagreement the matter should be referred to arbitration.

I have pointed out above some of the obvious defects, as we see them, in the proposals contained in your memorandum. If these are remedied, as suggested by us, we might be in a position to recommend their acceptance by the Congress. But as drafted in the memorandum sent to us, I regret that we are unable to accept them.

On the whole, therefore, if the suggestions are intended to have a binding effect, with all the will in the world to have an agreement with the League, we must repudiate most of them. Let us not run into any evil greater than the one all of us three parties should seek to avoid.

If an agreement honourable to both the parties and favourable to the growth of free and united India cannot be achieved, we would suggest that an interim provisional government responsible to the elected members of the Central Assembly be formed at once and the matters in dispute concerning the constituent assembly between the Congress and the League be referred to an independent tribunal.<sup>16</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

14. "Representatives shall be invited from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India."

15. "No major point in the union constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the assembly unless a majority of both the two major communities vote in its favour."

16. The last two paragraphs were drafted by Mahatma Gandhi.

## 9. Record of Fifth Meeting<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State said that the document circulated had been intended to focus the result of the previous conversations in Simla. As a result of the reactions in the conference and informal contacts, the delegation understood that there were the following points of agreement. The delegation fully appreciated, however, that such agreement was provisional and that the picture as a whole, when it had been completed, must be acceptable ....

As regards the groups, it was agreed—

- (a) that it was open to provinces to form themselves into groups with their own executive and legislature;
- (b) that no province should be compelled to remain in a group against its will ....

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad said that the Congress had not definitely agreed that there should be executives and legislatures in the groups. This was a point that had only been discussed, not agreed.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said that all of those present desired an agreement as soon as possible. He suggested that the League and the Congress might sit together and try to find a way out; but as that might not yield results, there should be an agreed umpire. Perhaps one representative on each side might sit with an umpire, and in case of disagreement, the umpire's decision would be accepted as final. The umpire would of course have to be a person accepted by both parties.

After some discussion Mr. Jinnah said that he would be very glad to sit with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and consider whether this proposal could be accepted, and if so, who the umpire should be.

There was then a short interval for discussion between Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru.

After the interval the conference reassembled. Mr. Jinnah said that, as was inevitable, a decision could not be reached immediately. He and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru suggested that there should be an adjournment till Saturday afternoon at 3 p.m. when he and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru would report progress.<sup>2</sup>

1. 9 May 1946. Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, 489-490.
2. The conference adjourned till 11 May 1946 for two days so that Jawaharlal and Jinnah could have talks.

**10. To M. A. Jinnah<sup>1</sup>**

10 May 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

In accordance with our decision yesterday at the conference, my colleagues have given a good deal of thought to the choice of a suitable umpire. We have felt that it would probably be desirable to exclude Englishmen, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. The field is thus limited. Nevertheless, we have drawn up a considerable list from which a choice can be made. I presume that you have also, in consultation with your executive, prepared a list of possible umpires. Would you like these two lists to be considered by us, that is, by you and me? If so, we can fix up a meeting for the purpose. After we have met, our recommendation can be considered by the eight of us, that is the four representatives of the Congress and the four representatives of the Muslim League, and a final choice can be made, which we can place before the conference when it meets tomorrow.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Jinnah replied the same day that "we would further examine your proposal with all its implications after your and my consulting our respective colleagues."

**11. To Stafford Cripps<sup>1</sup>**

Simla  
11.5.46

My dear Stafford,<sup>2</sup>

Last night, at 10 p.m., I received Jinnah's reply, a copy of which I enclose. I am writing to him again and shall see him at 10.30.

1. C.A.B. 127/106, Public Record Office, London.
2. Jawaharlal had written a letter also on 10 May 1946 to Stafford Cripps, which is not available in J.N. Papers. In his letter of 10 May 1946 to Attlee, Pethick-Lawrence referred to this letter: "This morning Stafford has had a private letter from Nehru indicating that he fears the scheme will break down if not over the selection of umpire then over the personal squabble between Jinnah and Azad ... Nehru also mentioned the matter of the powers of the new Executive Council of the Viceroy in the interim government."

It is clear that he is not going to commit himself about the umpire and will not suggest names. It is the old well-established technique. When we meet he will insist that Congress representatives should be such and such and no other. I shall have to tell him that we cannot agree to any limitation of this kind.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

## 12. To M. A. Jinnah<sup>1</sup>

11 May 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Your letter of May 10th reached me at ten last night.

During the talk we had at Viceregal Lodge, you referred to various matters besides the choice of an umpire, and I gave you my reactions in regard to them. But I was under the impression that the proposal to have an umpire had been agreed to and our next business was to suggest names. Indeed it was when some such agreement was reached in the conference that we had our talk. My colleagues have proceeded on this basis and prepared a list of suitable names. The conference will expect us to tell them this afternoon the name of the umpire we fix upon, or at any rate to place before them suggestions in this behalf.

The chief implication in having an umpire is to agree to accept his final decision. We agree to this. We suggest that we might start with this and report accordingly to the conference.

As suggested by you, I shall come over to your place of residence at about 10.30 this morning.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Jinnah replied the same day that he had agreed only to sit with Jawaharlal and "consider whether this proposal could be accepted, and if so, who the umpire should be".

### 13. Record of Sixth Meeting<sup>1</sup>

The Secretary of State said that the delegation had understood that the Congress and the Muslim League had agreed in principle to the proposition that outstanding points of difference should be settled by an umpire and that they were going to meet privately to discuss the matter. They hoped that agreement had been reached on this basis.

Mr. Jinnah said that it was not the case that there had been any agreement. He had said that he would consider this proposal. He had met Pandit Nehru and had consulted his colleagues. The result of his examination of the proposal was that if there was to be arbitration there must be terms of reference. The first question which would arise was the question of the partition of India. The Muslim League regarded this as settled by the verdict of the Muslims at the election. It was inconceivable that a matter of this sort should ever be the subject of arbitration. If there were a decision against partition the arbitrator would decide the union constitution. There would be no means of enforcing the arbitrator's decisions and difficulties would arise over the selection of a single person to arbitrate. The Secretary of State said that at the last meeting he had read out a list of points which he understood to be agreed subject to agreement on the whole picture when it was complete. Mr. Jinnah said that he had agreed to nothing — no single point had been agreed upon. All he had said was that if the Congress would agree to groups of provinces as desired by the Muslim League he would seriously consider a union. He had not dissented to what the Secretary of State had said because before he had been asked to speak Pandit Nehru had made his proposal. He was sorry if this had led to misunderstanding.

Pandit Nehru said that his suggestion was that there should be discussion between representatives of each side who would agree beforehand on an arbitrator who would decide points of difference which could not be resolved by discussion. The Congress considered that the arbitrator should not be an Englishman, a Hindu, a Muslim or a Sikh. They had drawn up a list of impartial persons, some of them judges and some of them from the international field. There were many ways of arranging arbitration but in view of Mr. Jinnah's attitude the question did not arise. Mr. Jinnah said that if anything at all were agreed

1. 11 May 1946. Extracts. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 508-511.

there might be some question of arbitration. Until the Muslim League knew that there would be groups of provinces and what provinces would be in them, they could not consider arbitration. 'The Secretary of State said that he understood it to be complementarily agreed on the one hand that there should be groups and on the other that there should be a union. Mr. Jinnah said that he could not agree to an arbitrator deciding on the question of the sovereignty of Pakistan. Subject to the whole picture, he was willing to agree to the sovereignty of Pakistan being delegated to a union for the three subjects providing a sovereign Pakistan was recognised in the form of a group. He was prepared to consider arbitration on other points when he knew what they were.

Pandit Nehru said that this meant coming to an agreement on fundamentals. Congress and the Muslim League were completely opposed on the question of partition or otherwise. For Mr. Jinnah the groups were the essence of the proposal. Congress thought that a strong centre was essential and that it should have subjects additional to the three, including currency, customs and planning. They had not agreed to the imposition of groups or to their having legislatures or executives. They were prepared to have arbitration on these issues.

Mr. Jinnah said that the Muslim League conception was that there would be two groups of provinces. These would be federations which would confederate. If there were no executives or legislatures in the groups the union would be formed of provinces and of States and the whole conception was destroyed....

Pandit Nehru said that the least the Congress could agree to was a union centre with the three subjects and having the right to raise its own revenue by direct taxation. Currency and planning must also be central although the latter was in a large sense advisory. Congress were agreeable to provinces exercising their autonomy to form groups with the right to opt out of a group.

Mr. Jinnah said that he could not agree to more than three subjects at the Centre and the method of financing the union must be left open to the constituent assembly. The character of the groups could not go to arbitration. The arbitrator might decide that there would be no executives or legislatures and in effect there would then be no groups.

Pandit Nehru said that the real point was whether the group should function as a government with an executive or as a more informal association. Congress considered that three layers of governments would not be a workable arrangement but they could not prevent provinces having the right to come together.

Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that named provinces might form a constitution-making body for the group, subject to option out after the

constitution had been framed. Mr. Jinnah agreed that there could be option out....

Pandit Nehru said that a constitution-making body could not be bound to decisions by arbitration. If it was a large enough body it was likely to reach a decision. He asked whether arbitration had been ruled out by Mr. Jinnah at the present stage.

Mr. Jinnah said that the first thing was that the provinces must be grouped. This was not to be the subject of arbitration. The two-group constitution-making bodies would then meet, of course, on the basis of parity. They would not decide as one body....

Pandit Nehru said on Mr. Jinnah's proposal no constitution for the union would ever be framed. He wished to make it clear that the Congress would not accept the States being represented in the constitution-making body or in the legislature by the Princes' nominees, nor would they accept the States as a third group. The Congress did not agree to parity in the Central legislature. Provision could be made to safeguard the rights of a community without parity which would give rise to trouble. If the constitution did not reflect realities of the situation it would be unstable and produce a state of bitterness and frustration. The Congress were entirely opposed to the groups being sovereign bodies. They were prepared however for the question of legislatures and executives for the groups to be put to arbitration. They would agree to safeguards on the lines of Clause (II)<sup>2</sup> in the union constitution.

The Muslim League representatives said that they would require parity of representation in the union constitution. There were many important issues besides communal issues and there were precedents for equal representation of unequal parts in a federation.

The Secretary of State said that parity had grave disadvantages. Clause (H) would give real protection. He thought that Mr. Jinnah would agree that on communal issues one-third of the population could not expect to be able to vote down the other two-thirds. In doubtful cases there must be some arbitral machinery.

The conference then discussed whether there was anything further that could be done in the hope of securing agreement. It was agreed that Mr. Jinnah would put down in writing the precise conditions on which the Muslim League would be prepared to negotiate further. The Congress representatives agreed to prepare proposals of their own in an endeavour to find common ground....

2. See *ante*, p. 160, footnote 15.



#### 14. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
12 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

As decided yesterday, I am sending you a note on behalf of the Congress regarding the proposals which might form the basis of an agreement. I am also sending you another note in regard to the Muslim League's proposals.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7* Vol. VII, p. 518.

2. See succeeding items.

#### 15. Points Suggested by Congress as Basis of Agreement<sup>1</sup>

1. The constituent assembly to be formed as follows:

(i) Representatives shall be elected by each provincial assembly by proportional representation on (single transferable vote). The number so elected should be one-fifth of the number of members of the assembly and they may be members of the assembly or others.

(ii) Representatives from the States on the basis of their population in proportion to the representation from British India. How these representatives are to be chosen is to be considered later.

2. The constituent assembly shall draw up a constitution for the federal union. This shall consist of an all-India federal government and legislature dealing with foreign affairs, defence, communications, fundamental rights, currency, customs and planning, as well as such other subjects as, on closer scrutiny, may be found to be intimately allied to

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, 12 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 518-519.

them. The federal union will have necessary powers to obtain for itself the finances it requires for these subjects and the power to raise revenues in its own right. The union must also have power to take remedial action in cases of breakdown of the constitution and in grave public emergencies.

3. All the remaining powers shall vest in the provinces or units.

4. Groups of provinces may be formed and such groups may determine the provincial subjects which they desire to take in common.

5. After the constituent assembly has decided the constitution for the all-India federal union as laid down in paragraph two above, the representatives of the provinces may form groups to decide the provincial constitutions for their group and, if they wish, a group constitution.

6. No major point in the all-India federal constitution which affects the communal issue shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present in assembly and voting are separately in its favour. Provided that in case there is no agreement on any such issue, it will be referred to arbitration. In case of doubt as to whether any point is a major communal issue, the Speaker will decide, or, if so desired, it may be referred to the Federal Court.

7. In the event of a dispute arising in the process of constitution-making the specific issue shall be referred to arbitration.

8. The constitution should provide machinery for its revision at any time subject to such checks as may be desired. If so desired, it may be specifically stated that this whole constitution may be reconsidered after ten years.

## **16. Note by the Congress on the Muslim League's Suggestions<sup>1</sup>**

The approach of the Muslim League is so different from that of the Congress in regard to these matters that it is a little difficult to deal

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, 12 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 519-521.

with each point separately without reference to the rest. The picture as envisaged by the Congress is briefly given in a separate note.<sup>2</sup> From consideration of this note and the Muslim League's proposals the difficulties and the possible agreement will become obvious.

The Muslim League's proposals<sup>3</sup> are dealt with below briefly:

1. We suggest that the proper procedure is for one constitution-making body or constituent assembly to meet for the whole of India and later for groups to be formed if so desired by the provinces concerned. The matter should be left to the provinces and if they wish to function as a group they are at liberty to do so and to frame their own constitution for the purpose.

In any event Assam has obviously no place in the group mentioned, and the North West Frontier Province, as the elections show, is not in favour of this proposal.

2. We have agreed to residuary powers, apart from the Central subjects, vesting in the provinces. They can make such use of them as they like and, as has been stated above, function as a group. What the ultimate nature of such a group may be cannot be determined at this stage and should be left to the representatives of the provinces concerned.

3. We have suggested that the most suitable method of election would be by single transferable vote. This would give proper representation to the various communities in proportion to their present representation in the legislatures. If the population proportion is taken, we have no particular objection, but this would lead to difficulties in all the provinces where there is weightage in favour of certain communities. The principle approved of would necessarily apply to all the provinces.

2. See the previous item.

3. The Muslim League proposed: (i) the six Muslim majority provinces should have their own constitution-making body, which should decide which powers, other than defence, foreign affairs and communications necessary for defence, should be provincial and which should be central to what was called Pakistan federation; (ii) in a joint constitution-making body with the non-Muslim group it should be open to discussions whether the union should have a legislature and how it should be financed, but in any event not by means of taxation; (iii) no decision of the union on any controversial matter should be taken by a majority of less than three-fourths. There were also proposals about opting out, parity in the union, fundamental rights and other matters of detail.

4. There is no necessity for opting out of a province from its group as the previous consent of the provinces is necessary for joining the group.

5. We consider it essential that the federal union should have a legislature. We also consider it essential that the union should have power to raise its own revenue.

6 and 7. We are entirely opposed to parity of representation as between groups of provinces in the union executive or legislature. We think that the provision to the effect that no major communal issue in the union constitution shall be deemed to be passed by the constituent assembly unless a majority of the members of the community or communities concerned present and voting in the constituent assembly are separately in its favour, is a sufficient and ample safeguard of all minorities. We have suggested something wider and including all communities than has been proposed elsewhere. This may give rise to some difficulties in regard to small communities, but all such difficulties can be got over by reference to arbitration. We are prepared to consider the method of giving effect to this principle so as to make it more feasible.

8. This proposal<sup>4</sup> is so sweeping in its nature that no government or legislature can function at all. Once we have safeguarded major communal issues other matters, whether controversial or not, require no safeguard. This will simply mean safeguarding vested interests of all kinds and preventing progress, or indeed any movement in any direction. We, therefore, entirely disapprove of it.

9. We are entirely agreeable to the inclusion of fundamental rights and safeguards concerning religion, culture and like matters in the constitution. We suggest that the proper place for this is the all-India federal union constitution. There should be uniformity in regard to these fundamental rights all over India.

10. The constitution of the union will inevitably contain provisions for its revision. It may also contain a provision for its full reconsideration at the end of ten years. The matter will be open then for a complete reconsideration. Though it is implied, we would avoid reference to secession as we do not wish to encourage this idea.

4. See point iii of footnote 3 above.

## 17. Appeal for Communal Unity<sup>1</sup>

The present political situation has reached a critical juncture.<sup>2</sup> Everyone has to be prepared to shoulder his responsibility bravely. People should develop a balanced and unbiased outlook and do their utmost to establish complete communal unity. They should take care to see that they do not allow their emotions to get the better of their reason.

The freedom that is coming is not going to be the swaraj of the Hindus or of the Muslims, but it will be the freedom of the 400 million people of India. The Congress has always been inspired by high ideals, and, in all its struggles against British imperialism, it has never shown any malice or bitterness. If only the people can remember this, they will find no difficulty in facing the situation.

I deplore the raising of petty issues, or putting obstacles in the way of India's freedom, but in spite of all obstacles, India will soon be free.

1. Speech at Simla, 13 May 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 May 1946.
2. At the seventh meeting of the Simla Conference on 12 May 1946, with the Congress and the Muslim League remaining opposed to each other, Pethick-Lawrence announced the breakdown of the conference. The Cabinet Mission returned to Delhi promising to issue a statement defining the next steps to be taken.

## 18. Assurance to Indian Christians<sup>1</sup>

Indian Christians need have no qualms about their religious freedom in an independent India. Although our ultimate aim is to establish a secular state not identified with any particular religion, freedom of conscience and recognition of the religious rights of all citizens must be the starting point. Indian Christians are part and parcel of the Indian people. Their traditions go back to 1,500 years and more, and they form one of the many enriching elements in the country's cultural and spiritual life. In a country where there are so many creeds we must learn to be tolerant.

1. Interview to a representative of the *Catholic Herald* of London, given some time before 12 May 1946. From *The Hindu*, 14 May 1946.

## 19. Wavell's Note on Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

I saw Nehru for 1½ hours (8.30 a.m. — 10 a.m.) about the Executive Council but did no more, I fear, than discourage the hopes the S. of S. had obviously given him yesterday<sup>2</sup> that we would give in on the parity issue and make a convention depriving the Viceroy of his powers and handing over supreme control to the interim government. I am sure we should have been all right on both these questions if we had been firm and definite from the start, but the S. of S.'s vagueness and Cripps' continuous courting, flattery and appeasement of Congress have led them to believe they can get what they want. Nehru talked of "vital forces" at work in the country which must be taken into account; I said it was the business of a government to control and direct "vital forces" and "mass sentiment" and "fundamental issues" (which were the sort of phrases he used) and not to follow them blindly, they were usually ignorant and often misleading. I told him my father's favourite story of a French mob rushing on to some foolishness which was obviously wrong, and a spectator stopping a man who was following the mob and asking him why he did so: his reply was: *mais il faut que je les suive, je suis leur chef*.<sup>3</sup> I don't know whether I moved Nehru at all but I made it quite clear that I was quite definite and not proposing to compromise.

1. Delhi, 14 May 1946. Wavell: *The Viceroy's Journal*, (London, 1973), pp. 268-269. There is no note of this interview in the India Office records.
2. No record of Jawaharlal's interview with Pethick-Lawrence is available.
3. "But I have to follow them, for I am their leader."

## 20. Note on Meeting of Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad<sup>1</sup>

His Excellency started the proceedings by saying that this was the last chance of securing a unified India by agreement. His Majesty's

1. Delhi, 16 May 1946. Extracts. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 581-582.

Government had allowed no requirements for interests of others to stand in the way. So far as His Majesty's Government were concerned, they regarded this statement<sup>2</sup> as final, and changes could only be made by agreement between the parties....

As to the negotiating committee for the States [paragraph 19 (ii)]<sup>3</sup> Pandit Nehru foresaw difficulty in its members enjoying a representative capacity in the early stages of the constituent assembly. He pointed out that the members would represent only the Princes and not their peoples, and he did not see how it would fit in with the assembly.

On paragraph 12,<sup>4</sup> Pandit Nehru questioned the sentence beginning "To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme", as not correctly representing the Congress view.

Referring to 19 (vii),<sup>5</sup> Pandit Nehru asked what would happen in the event of a deadlock arising in the constituent assembly. He was told

2. The Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May 1946 proposed an interim government which would carry on the administration of India until a new constitution-making body based on a three-tiered constitutional structure to work out the details could be formed. The proposal for a three-tiered constitution—provinces, groups of provinces and a union—ensured for the provinces claimed for Pakistan a large measure of autonomy. They would be joined with the rest of India in a union confined to the control of defence, foreign affairs and communications. It was indicated that in the all-India union the Hindu-majority and the Muslim-majority groups of provinces might have equal representation, and there might be a provision for a province to have the right to secede from the union after a period of years.
3. "...the States would be given in the final constituent assembly appropriate representation which would not, on the basis of the calculations adopted for British India, exceed 93, but the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation. The States would in the preliminary stage be represented by a negotiating committee."
4. Paragraph 12 of the Cabinet Mission's statement read: "This decision does not however blind us to the very real Muslim apprehensions that their culture and political and social life might become submerged in a purely unitary India, in which the Hindus with their greatly superior numbers must be a dominating element. To meet this the Congress have put forward a scheme under which provinces would have full autonomy subject only to a minimum of central subjects such as foreign affairs, defence and communications."
5. It read: "In the Union constituent assembly resolution varying the provisions of paragraph 15 or raising any major communal issue shall require a majority of the representatives present and voting of each of the two major communities. The chairman of the assembly shall decide which (if any) of the resolutions raise major communal issues and shall, if so requested by a majority of the representatives of either of the major communities, consult the Federal Court before giving his decision."

that the Mission had discussed the possibility of recommending provisions for arbitration, but had thought it best not to make a recommendation on this point. It was, however, open to the parties to agree to arbitration if they were so disposed.

In answer to a question from Pandit Nehru as to what would happen if the parties were unwilling to cooperate on the basis of the plan set out in the statement, the Viceroy said that if one party came in and the other did not, we should have to deal with the one that did.

Pandit Nehru thought that the introduction of independence should not be delayed until the constitution-making was complete, but that progress towards it should be made during the period of the interim government. His Excellency said that the interim government must be under the existing constitution.

Asking as to the status of the constituent assembly, he was told that it might be regarded as a sovereign body, for the purpose of constitution-making, and that when agreement had been reached it would remain for Parliament to repeal the Government of India Act, 1935, and for formal steps of recognition to be taken.

Finally, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru made it clear that their object had been at this meeting to ascertain more exactly what the provisions of the statement meant, rather than to offer any criticisms of it. The Congress would consider the statement in the course of the next few days and would communicate their views to the Mission. They were informed that if further explanations were desired, the members of the Mission would be at their disposal.

## 21. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Pethick-Lawrence<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
20th May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

My Committee have carefully considered the statement issued by the Cabinet delegation on May 16th, and they have seen Gandhiji after the interviews<sup>2</sup> he has had with you and Sir Stafford Cripps. There are certain matters about which I have been asked to write to you.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 639-641.

2. At which Mahatma Gandhi had objected to the grouping of provinces and to parity in the interim executive.



As we understand the statement, it contains certain recommendations and procedure for the election and functioning of the constituent assembly.<sup>3</sup> The assembly itself, when formed, will, in my Committee's opinion, be a sovereign body for the purpose of drafting the constitution unhindered by any external authority, as well as for entering into a treaty. Further that it will be open to the assembly to vary in any way it likes the recommendations and the procedure suggested by the Cabinet delegation. The constituent assembly being a sovereign body for the purposes of the constitution, its final decisions will automatically take effect.

As you were aware some recommendations have been made in your statement which are contrary to the Congress stand as it was taken at the Simla Conference and elsewhere. Naturally we shall try to get the assembly to remove what we consider defects in the recommendations. For this purpose we shall endeavour to educate the country and the constituent assembly.

There is one matter in which my Committee were pleased to hear Gandhiji say that you were trying to see that the European members in the various provincial assemblies, particularly Bengal and Assam, would neither offer themselves as candidates nor vote for the election of delegates to the constituent assembly.

No provision has been made for the election of a representative from British Baluchistan. So far as we know, there is no elected assembly or any other kind of chamber which might select such a representative. One individual may not make much of a difference in the constituent assembly, but it would make a difference if such an individual speaks for a whole province which he really does not represent in any way. It is far better not to have representation at all than to have this kind of representation which will mislead and which may decide the fate of Baluchistan contrary to the wishes of its inhabitants. If any kind of popular representation can be arranged, we would welcome it. My Committee were pleased, therefore, to hear Gandhiji say that you are

3. The procedure in the constituent assembly would be that after a preliminary meeting of the entire body, the provincial representatives would divide up into sections—Section A consisting of Madras, Bombay, United Provinces, Bihar and Orissa; Section B of the Punjab, the North West Frontier Province, Sind and British Baluchistan; Section C of Bengal and Assam. These sections would settle the constitutions of the provinces of their sections, and would also decide whether a group should be formed and, if so, with what subjects it should deal. Finally all the members of the constituent assembly would reassemble to settle the union constitution.

likely to include Baluchistan within the scope of the advisory committee's<sup>4</sup> work.

In your recommendations for the basic form of the constitution (page 3 of the printed draft, No. 5) you state that provinces should be free to form groups with executives and legislatures and each group could determine the provincial subjects to be taken in common. Just previous to this you state that all subjects other than the union subjects and all residuary powers should vest in the provinces. Later on in the statement, however, on page 5 you state that the provincial representatives<sup>5</sup> to the constituent assembly will divide up into three sections and "these sections shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for these provinces." There appears to us to be a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions. The basic provision gives full autonomy to a province to do what it likes and subsequently there appears to be a certain compulsion in the matter which clearly infringes that autonomy. It is true that at a later stage the provinces can opt out of any group. In any event it is not clear how a province or its representatives can be compelled to do something which they do not want to do. A provincial assembly may give a mandate to its representatives not to enter any group or a particular group or section. As Sections B and C have been formed it is obvious that one province will play a dominating role in the section—the Punjab in Section B and Bengal in Section C. It is conceivable that this dominating province may frame a provincial constitution entirely against the wishes of Sind or the North-West Frontier Province or Assam. It may even conceivably lay down rules, for elections and otherwise, thereby nullifying the provision for a province to opt out of a group. Such could never be the intention as it would be repugnant to the basic principles and policy of the scheme itself.

4. Under the Cabinet Mission plan special arrangements were proposed for the smaller minorities, which, on a population basis, would have no representation. They would be represented on an advisory committee which would be set up to advise the constituent assembly on all matters affecting the rights of the minorities.
5. Each province was to be allocated representatives proportionate to its population in the ratio of one to one million. This allocation was to be divided between the main communities in proportion to their population. For this purpose only three main communities were recognised—Muslim, Sikh and General; the General was to include all people who were not Muslims or Sikhs. The proposal contemplated a constituent assembly of 292 members from British India and 93 from the States. The British India members would be divided into 210 General, 78 Muslims and 4 Sikhs.

The question of the Indian States has been left vague and, therefore, I need not say much about it at this stage.<sup>6</sup> But it is clear that State representatives who come into the constituent assembly must do so more or less in the same way as the representatives of the provinces. The constituent assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements.

I have dealt above with some points arising out of your statement. Possibly some of them can be cleared up by you and the defects removed. The principal point, however, is, as stated above, that we look upon this constituent assembly as a sovereign body which can decide as it chooses in regard to any matter before it can give effect to its decision. The only limitation we recognise is that in regard to certain major communal issues the decision should be by a majority of each of the two major communities. We shall try to approach the public and the members of the constituent assembly with our own proposals for removing any defects in the recommendations made by you.

Gandhiji has informed my Committee that you contemplate that British troops will remain in India till after the establishment of the Government in accordance with the instrument produced by the constituent assembly. My Committee feel that the presence of foreign troops in India will be a negation of India's independence. India should be considered to be independent in fact from the moment that the national provisional government is established.

I shall be grateful to have an early reply so that my Committee may come to a decision in regard to your statement.<sup>7</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

6. The Indian States were to have 93 representatives in the constituent assembly, but the method of selecting them would be left to consultation between the assembly and the States rulers.
7. The objections raised in this letter and those in the Congress resolution on the Cabinet Mission plan adopted on 24 May 1946 were considered by Pethick-Lawrence in his reply to Maulana Azad dated 22 May 1946 and in a statement of the Mission on 25 May 1946. See *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 659-660, 688-689.

## 22. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

21 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

During our talks<sup>2</sup> yesterday I referred to a statement made by Mr. L.S. Amery. I find now that this was in the course of a letter to the *London Times*. I am enclosing a press cutting giving this letter.

You will notice that after referring to the Viceroy's discretionary power, he says:

"Still less is there any obligation on the Government or Parliament of the country to interfere in the exercise of the discretion. Nothing, I believe, would be of greater help in bringing an Interim Government together and enabling it to discharge its great responsibilities with authority than that the British Government should make that point perfectly clear.

I see no reason why we should not declare here and now that we shall regard our relations to such a Government as in no way differing from our relations with the Government of any other partner member of the Commonwealth or for that matter with any other nation outside the Commonwealth."

Mr. Amery's views in regard to India and other matters are not mine and our approach has been very different. Yet from his own approach he has arrived at a conclusion which, in regard to this particular matter, is not very different from ours. It would be surprising indeed that the present Labour Government in Britain is more conservative in its Indian policy than Mr. Amery would like it to be.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 650-651.

2. In his diary entry for 20 May 1946 Wavell wrote: "I had 1½ hours with Nehru about the interim government. He kept on about the necessity for immediate independence and the impossibility of parity; and I kept steadily on our determination (mine really) not to give way on these issues. I don't know whether I made any effect; I did in the end get him down to reluctant discussion of names. He kept talking of vital forces and I insisted on jobs to be done and men to do them."

3. Wavell replied on 22 May 1946 that "I have never been ready to accept his [Amery's] suggestion that the Viceroy should be placed in the position of an irresponsible ruler entirely free from control by the British Government. Nor do I think that Parliament would ever accept any such proposal."

### 23. Congress Resolution on the Cabinet Mission Statement<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the statement dated May 16, 1946 issued by the delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence<sup>2</sup> relating to it that has passed between the Congress President and the members of the delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and cooperative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation with power and dignity in the counsels of the world. In considering the statement, the Working Committee have kept in view the picture of the future, in so far as this was available to them from the proposals made for the formation of a provisional government and the clarification given by members of the delegation. This picture is still incomplete and vague. It is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a decision as to how far this is in conformity with the objectives they aim at. These objectives are: independence for India, a strong, though limited, central authority, full autonomy for the provinces, the establishment of a democratic structure in the Centre and in the units, the guarantee of the fundamental rights of each individual so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth, and further that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework.

The Committee regret to find a divergence between these objectives and the various proposals that have been made on behalf of the British Government, and, in particular, there is no vital change envisaged during the interim period when the provisional government will function in spite of the assurance given in paragraph 23 of the statement.<sup>3</sup> If the independence of India is aimed at, then the functioning of the provisional government must approximate closely in fact, even though not in law, to that independence and all obstructions and hindrances to it should be remov-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. The Congress Working Committee passed the resolution on 24 May 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 679-682.
2. The letters exchanged by the Congress, the Muslim League and the Cabinet Mission during the Simla Conference were published in the newspapers on 18 May 1946.
3. This stated: "The British Government...will give the fullest measure of co-operation to the government so formed in the accomplishment of its tasks of administration and in bringing about as rapid and smooth a transition as possible."

ed. The continued presence of a foreign army of occupation is a negation of independence.<sup>4</sup>

The statement issued by the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy contains certain recommendations and suggests a procedure for the building up of a constituent assembly, which is sovereign in so far as the framing of the constitution is concerned. The Committee do not agree with some of these recommendations. In their view it will be open to the constituent assembly itself at any stage to make changes and variations, with the proviso that in regard to certain major communal matters a majority decision of both the major communities will be necessary.<sup>5</sup>

The procedure for the election of the constituent assembly is based on representation in the ratio of one to a million, but the application of this principle appears to have been overlooked in the case of European members of assemblies, particularly in Assam and Bengal.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, the Committee expect that this oversight will be corrected.<sup>7</sup>

The constituent assembly is meant to be a fully elected body, chosen by the elected members of the provincial legislatures. In Baluchistan there is no elected assembly or any other kind of chamber which might elect a representative for the constituent assembly. It would be improper for any kind of nominated individual to speak for the whole province of Baluchistan, which he really does not represent in any way.

In Coorg the Legislative Council contains some nominated members as well as Europeans elected from a special constituency of less than a hundred electors. Only the elected members from the general constituencies should participate in the election.

4. It was explained in the reply of the Cabinet Mission that during the interim period the British Parliament had, under the existing constitution, the ultimate responsibility for the security of India, and it was therefore necessary that British troops should remain.
5. In its reply on 25 May 1946, the Cabinet Mission assured the Congress that the projected constituent assembly would be free from interference, and when it had completed its labours the British Government would recommend to Parliament the action necessary to cede sovereignty to the Indian people, provided there was adequate provision for the protection of minorities and willingness to conclude a treaty for matters arising out of the transfer of power.
6. In the assemblies of Bengal and Assam (Section C) the Europeans had, under the Government of India Act of 1935, representation out of all proportion to their population. On this basis they would be in a position to elect seven representatives to the constituent assembly out of a total of 34 from Section C as a whole. Although their community numbered only 21,000 in the two provinces, they would have representation equivalent to seven millions.
7. The Cabinet Mission replied that this question was one for the Europeans to decide.

The statement of the Cabinet delegation affirms the basic principle of provincial autonomy and residuary powers vesting in the provinces. It is further said that provinces should be free to form groups. Subsequently, however, it is recommended that provincial representatives will divide up into sections which "shall proceed to settle the provincial constitutions for the provinces in each section and shall also decide whether any group constitution shall be set up for those provinces." There is a marked discrepancy in these two separate provisions, and it would appear that a measure of compulsion is introduced which clearly infringes the basic principle of provincial autonomy. In order to retain the recommendatory character of the statement, and in order to make the clauses consistent with each other, the Committee read paragraph 15 to mean that, in the first instance, the respective provinces will make their choice whether or not to belong to the section in which they are placed. Thus the constituent assembly must be considered as a sovereign body with final authority for the purpose of drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it.<sup>8</sup>

The provisions<sup>9</sup> in the statement in regard to the Indian States are vague and much has been left for future decision. The Working Committee would, however, like to make it clear that the constituent assembly cannot be formed of entirely disparate elements, and the manner of appointing State representatives for the constituent assembly must approximate, in so far as is possible, to the method adopted in the provinces. The Committee are gravely concerned to learn that even at this present moment some State governments are attempting to crush the spirit of their people with the help of armed forces. These recent developments in the States are of great significance in the present and for the future of India, as they indicate that there is no real change of policy on the part of some of the State governments and of those who exercise paramountcy.

A provisional national government must have a new basis and must be a precursor of the full independence that will emerge from the

8. The constituent assembly did not have sovereign rights. The powers and functions of the constituent assembly were to be recommendatory and not mandatory. But the Cabinet Mission was content to reply that the Congress interpretation of the paragraphs relating to the sections did not accord with its intentions. The grouping of provinces was an essential feature of the scheme and could be modified only by an agreement between the parties.
9. The Cabinet Mission had stated that the British Government could not and would not, in any circumstances, transfer paramountcy to an Indian government. Paramountcy would cease when an independent government came into being in British India. States would then be free to enter into federal relationship or political arrangements with the new government or among themselves.

constituent assembly. It must function in recognition of that fact, though changes in law need not be made at this stage. The Governor-General may continue as the head of that government during the interim period, but the government should function as a cabinet responsible to the Central Legislature. The status, powers and composition of the provisional government should be fully defined in order to enable the Committee to come to a decision.<sup>10</sup> Major communal issues shall be decided in the manner referred to above in order to remove any possible fear or suspicion from the minds of a minority.

The Working Committee consider that the connected problems involved in the establishment of a provisional government and a constituent assembly should be viewed together so that they may appear as parts of the same picture, and there may be coordination between the two, as well as an acceptance of the independence that is now recognised as India's right and due. It is only with the conviction that they are engaged in building up a free, great and independent India, that the Working Committee can approach this task and invite the cooperation of all the people of India. In the absence of a full picture, the Committee are unable to give a final opinion at this stage.<sup>11</sup>

10. The Congress was assured in reply that the interim government which would be entirely Indian would have the greatest possible freedom in the day-to-day administration and treated "with the same close consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government". Yet it would work under the existing constitution and therefore could not be responsible to the Central Legislature. It was open to its members to resign if they were in conflict with the legislature.
11. On 25 June 1946, the Congress announced its acceptance of the statement of 16 May subject to its own interpretation of the compulsory grouping of provinces.

## 24. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

25 May 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

You must have received the copy of the resolution<sup>2</sup> which the Congress Working Committee passed yesterday. The Committee is dispersing now and I am also leaving Delhi tomorrow evening. Before I go away I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to let you have a glimpse of

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 692-696.

2. See the preceding item.



what I have in my mind. We have met on several occasions during the past seven weeks and discussed various matters and, I suppose, we have got to know each other to some extent. I am grateful to you for your courtesies and your frank and friendly talks.

And yet I feel profoundly depressed and disappointed at the turn events have taken. We came to Delhi two months ago with some hope that at long last a way might be found for a peaceful settlement of the Indian problem on the basis of independence. You know that the independence of India has been our sheet-anchor for many years, independence, that is, not in the future but now. It was only on that basis that we could discuss any future or present arrangements in India. Mr. Attlee's statement<sup>3</sup> in the British Parliament encouraged us. Then came the Cabinet delegation and we began these long and interminable discussions. Repeatedly we were held up, as we are today, because someone wanted more time. This was sometimes, I suppose, unavoidable, but it has been nevertheless an odd procedure where vital and urgent problems are concerned. Gradually people's enthusiasm waned and they began to think of other matters.

I have no doubt about the earnest desire of the members of the Cabinet delegation to find a satisfactory solution of India's problems. But the impression has been growing upon me that there are certain limitations under which they are working and which somehow came in our way. What these limitations are I do not know, but occasionally the glimpses we have had are very far from reassuring and we have felt that, despite everything, the old spirit and the old approach have not changed so much.

This has been particularly so in regard to the proposals for the formation of the provisional government. Much has happened during the past few years which has changed India and the world. And yet these proposals do not indicate as if anything remarkable had happened. We are still told of the responsibility of the British Parliament and the Governor-General's prerogatives and discretionary powers. It is surely not on this basis that it is sought to usher in Indian independence. Over four years ago, when Sir Stafford Cripps came to India in March 1942, we put forward certain proposals for a provisional government. There was no agreement then and subsequently there was conflict on a big scale. Our people have hardened since then and their expectations have risen,

3. On 15 March 1946, Attlee assured Indians that the Cabinet Mission's intention was to help India to attain freedom as speedily and completely as possible. He also stated that the British Government would not allow the minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority.

especially as the war had ended. We took some risk in presenting proposals now more or less in line with our proposals in April 1942. We knew that many of our people would be grievously disappointed, and yet taking a larger view of national and international problems we decided to stick to what we had said four years ago. For this we were criticised and to some extent condemned.

Even so there remained a big gap between what we said and what the British Government proposed. That gap remains and behind it appear to be incompatible assumptions and premises. Whatever structure we may build now or for the future must have sure foundations and should lead rapidly to the objectives we aim at. More and more we have begun to fear that the British proposals for a provisional government are, from our point of view, based on wrong foundations and there are dangers ahead. Compared even with the talks in Simla in July 1945, when the war was still going on, there is a comedown. It amazes us that the British Government should expect us to accept this position.

None of us want to join any government or council which is more or less a continuation of the present Governor-General's Executive Council. We could have done that years ago if we had been inclined that way. We can only think in terms of a provisional national government functioning as a free government, responsible to a legislature. That government or cabinet must be cohesive and capable of working as a team. The manner in which it is proposed to make it is just to collect odd individuals, who however able (and some of them might well lack even ability) do not form any kind of team. Then the idea of parity is one which repels and will be deeply resented. Curious enough the kind of parity proposed now is even worse than the grouping suggested at Simla last year.<sup>4</sup>

In spite of my long conversations with you I have been wholly unable to understand why the British Government still talks as it did many years ago. That talk does not fit in with its professions. Everybody knows that technical and legal difficulties cannot stand in the way of solving vital national problems. Everybody also knows that we do not consider the British Parliament as our guardian and trustee. When it is acknowledged that India is going to be independent soon and the

4. The Congress was not willing to accept parity of representation in the interim government to carry on the administration until the new constitution came into being, because the position had been altered from what it had been a year earlier when it conceded the principle at the Simla Conference; for it now controlled eight of the eleven provincial governments and representation on a numerical basis had been recognised as the foundation of the constitution-making body.

authority of the British Parliament over India will be ended, where is the difficulty in recognising this as a fact now? There appears to be some snag somewhere which I am unable to understand. Or is it that old habits of mind do not change even with changing conditions? What surprises me greatly is the apparent belief in some people's minds that we do not mean what we say. If that had been so our lives during the last quarter of a century or more would have been very different from what they have actually been. I should have thought that we had sufficiently demonstrated that we were in deadly earnest.

These long-drawn-out conversations have been very exhausting even more mentally than physically. But during the past month I have been greatly troubled over various developments in the States. If this kind of thing can happen even now in the States, there is something very wrong somewhere, and the whole picture of the immediate future is affected. I cannot imagine that these developments could have taken place without the active or passive concurrence of the Political Department or its agents.

I wrote to you about Faridkot some days ago. It is now nearly a month since this affair started and there has been, and is still, a state of chaos there.<sup>5</sup> It shames me to read accounts of what is happening there. I understand that the Resident of the Punjab States has to bear a measure of responsibility for all this, and in fact that he is stoutly resisting the demand for an impartial inquiry. After all that has happened there and is still happening, an inquiry is essential and I cannot understand how anyone can object to it. After waiting for some weeks I have decided to go to Faridkot. I shall leave Delhi tomorrow night and reach Faridkot on Monday morning.

A far more serious matter than that of Faridkot is that of Kashmir where martial law prevails all over the valley.<sup>6</sup> Both as the President of

5. On 28 April 1946 a clash occurred at Faridkot station when a party of members of the Praja Mandal from outside Faridkot attempted to enter the State to hold a meeting. This incident was followed by almost daily arrivals of groups of Praja Mandal members. The State authorities reacted by arresting some citizens of Faridkot and dispersing those from outside. Under a settlement reached between the Raja and Jawaharlal on 27 May it was agreed that the ban on entry into the State would be cancelled and full liberty granted for the formation of bodies like the Praja Mandal. A public enquiry by the Chief Justice of Faridkot was also to be held.
6. In Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, and Mirza Mohammad Afzal Beg, an ex-Minister, had been arrested following an agitation to repudiate the allegiance of the people to the Maharaja of Kashmir. More than 450 arrests had been made and soldiers were patrolling Srinagar. The Prime Minister of Kashmir said that the authorities feared large-scale sabotage.

the All India States People's Conference and as a Kashmiri I am intensely interested in what is happening in Kashmir and my mind is full of anxiety. My first impulse was to rush off to Kashmir, for a large number of my colleagues and friends have been arrested and a state of frightfulness prevails in the valley. I do not like to desert my colleagues when they are in trouble or are being tyrannised over. I have, however, held myself back for the present as I was not clear in my mind as to how I could help. My object in going would naturally be to help end this state of frightfulness and to allow the people to return to more normal conditions. So far as I can gather the State authorities are bent on breaking and crushing the spirit of the people and are using their army as if they were occupying recently conquered enemy territory. Indeed some of the accounts I have had are worse. In this state of mind they are not likely to listen to reason. If I went my first business would be to see some of my friends and colleagues in prison, notably Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who is also the vice-president of the All India States People's Conference. I do not know how the State authorities would react to this or to any further steps that I might take. If they pass any unreasonable orders restricting my movement I might have to disobey them.

This problem of Kashmir has been causing me a lot of trouble and anxiety for I do not wish to do anything which might worsen an already bad situation. I have decided therefore to mention this to you, to find out how far the Political Department is involved in it, and what it proposes to do in dealing with the situation. Obviously the Resident in Kashmir cannot be a neutral observer.

I shall not add to the length of this letter by giving details of what is happening in Kashmir. But some information just received from a reliable source will give you some idea of this. People walking along the streets are forced sometimes to take off their turbans to clean the streets or pavements. In some places crawling orders have been promulgated. The shouting of loyalty slogans is enforced by the military almost at the point of the bayonet. The inner shrines of the mosques have been occupied by the military. The wall of the Juma Masjid has been demolished to make a passage way for military lorries. Dead bodies, usually of Muslims, are not handed to relatives for proper religious burial but are burnt with petrol. These are very grave provocations to human feeling and religious sentiment and must lead to extreme bitterness and resentment as well as to increasing communal antagonism.

I have decided, for the present, to defer my visit to Kashmir, so that any suggestion you might make in regard to it might help me to decide as to how I should proceed. I am eager and anxious to do something for my colleagues and for my old homeland, and if things continue in

their present shape I shall not be able to keep away whatever my other engagements might be.

These developments in the States affect the overall States situation in India vitally and their whole future is involved. Only a very foolish person will think that by using the military and declaring martial law, he can solve the State's problem. This is the surest way of aggravating it.

Please forgive me for this very long letter.<sup>7</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

7. Wavell did not reply to this letter but discussed it with Jawaharlal the same day. No official record of this interview is available. In his diary entry for 26 May 1946 Wavell wrote: "I had over an hour with Nehru, to reply to his letter. It went much as usual, and was quite friendly but I don't know whether either of us persuades the other much, though we get on quite well. The more I see of Nehru, the better I like him." *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 278.

## 25. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
May 25th, 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Your Excellency will remember that the demand of the Congress from the very beginning of the present discussions regarding the interim government has been that there must be a legal and constitutional change in order to give it the status of a truly national government. The Working Committee has felt that this is necessary in the interest of a peaceful settlement of the Indian problem. Without such status, the interim government would not be in a position to infuse in the Indian people a

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 690-691.

consciousness of freedom which is today essential. Both Lord Pethick-Lawrence and you have, however, pointed out the difficulties in the way of effecting such constitutional changes, while at the same time assuring us that the interim government would have in fact, if not in law, the status of a truly national government. The Working Committee feel that after the British Government's declaration that the constituent assembly will be the final authority for framing the constitution and any constitution framed by it will be binding, the recognition of Indian independence is imminent. It is inevitable that the interim government which is to function during the period of the constituent assembly must reflect this recognition. In my last conversation with you, you stated that it was your intention to function as a constitutional head of the government and that in practice the interim government would have the same powers as that of a Cabinet in the Dominions. This is, however, a matter which is so important that it would not be fair either to you or to the Congress Working Committee to let it rest upon what transpired in informal conversations. Even without any change in the law there could be some formal understanding by which the Congress Working Committee may be assured that the interim government would in practice function like a Dominion Cabinet.<sup>2</sup>

The question of the responsibility of the interim government to the Central Assembly may also be treated in the same way. The existing law permits an executive independent of the Central Legislature, but a convention could be created by which its tenure of office would depend on its enjoyment of such confidence.

The other details regarding the composition<sup>3</sup> of the interim cabinet which came up in my discussions with you would all depend upon the satisfactory solution of the two basic questions enumerated above. If the questions of status and responsibility of the interim government are satisfactorily solved<sup>4</sup> I am confident that the other questions would present no difficulty at all. As I have already written to you, the Working Committee has been adjourned and will be summoned again when occasion demands. I would request you to let me have an indication of your decision and programme, so that the Working Committee may be summoned accordingly. I am leaving for Mussoorie on Monday and

2. Waveli, in reply, denied that he had promised what was claimed though he had said he was sure the new government would be treated by the British Government with the same close consultation and consideration as a Dominion Government.

3. "and magnitude," omitted in the final version.

4. The rest of this sentence in the draft read: "I hope we would be able to decide other questions without any delay."

would request you to reply to my letter there.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

## 26. The Powers of an Interim Government<sup>1</sup>

The central government to be formed during the interim period should be a real provisional government with freedom to act internally and externally as it chooses. We want it to be responsible to the Central Legislature because that is the only body at present to which it can be made responsible.

We have agreed, in view of the existing circumstances, that the Governor-General should be the head of the Government, but we expect him to be only a constitutional head. In order to avoid any dispute about major communal issues, we are prepared to accept the convention that such issues should be decided by agreement of all parties concerned, or if necessary by convention to that effect and without any changes in statute. It would not be difficult to have some legal changes passed through the British Parliament, but we do not ask for such changes.

In effect, the provisional government should function as an independent authority with some commitments from the previous stage, which we accept. Such a government can only function satisfactorily if there is coordination and teamwork within.

As regards the methods of choice of the Members of the Executive Council and the limitations inevitable in such a procedure, I may say that a number of odd individuals collected together may pull in different directions and come in the way of any joint efforts. At present the Viceroy's Executive Council consists of heads of departments who may have nothing in common with each other.<sup>2</sup> The new government

1. Interview to *The Hindu*, Delhi, 25 May 1946. From *The Hindu*, 26 May 1946.
2. On 9 May 1946, the Viceroy's Executive Council resigned to help the arrangements which the Cabinet Mission was making. On 29 June 1946, the Viceroy formed a caretaker government of officials to carry on in the interim period until a national government took over. This government functioned upto 25 August 1946.

must be essentially different. It must function as a cabinet and have all the attributes of a national government. Its main function should be to prepare the country as rapidly as possible for complete changeover to independence.

During this interim period, the provisional government will have to deal not only with many common subjects between provinces and States but also with the question of the States joining the federal union. For the interim period, it might be desirable to have a joint committee representing the provisional government and States for all such questions. The present Political Department may continue for this period, but it should be brought into line with the provisional government and act in consultation with it.

The question of the presence of the British army is of particular importance. If it is agreed, as it apparently is on all sides, that our objective is to transfer sovereignty to the people of India and make the country fully independent as rapidly as possible then all our present steps should further this object and mirror it. That is why the provisional government should, in effect though not in law, function as an independent government which is responsible for the summoning and functioning of the constituent assembly. This constituent assembly must be presumed to be a sovereign body for drawing up a constitution and giving effect to it without any external interference. Obviously also, an independent India cannot have foreign troops on its soil, for these are in the nature of an army of occupation. Therefore, the principle of early withdrawal of British troops from India must be accepted, though the actual process may take some time.

I have not agreed with Mr. Amery in many matters in the past, but I am in complete agreement with his recent statement, where he says "I see no reason why we should not declare here and now that we shall regard our relations to such government, the interim government in India, as in no way differing from our relations with the government of any other partner of the British Commonwealth or for that matter with many other nations outside the Commonwealth". That is the correct approach. It would be surprising indeed if the Labour Government, committed to the independence of India, hesitated to adopt it. Either there is this final decision in favour of Indian independence or there isn't. There can be no halfway house. If a decision has been made, it should be given effect in practice.



## 27. To Lord Pethick-Lawrence<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26 May 1946

My dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

Thank you for your letter.<sup>2</sup> I am just going to the station to catch a train for Faridkot. I return probably day after tomorrow morning and leave the same evening. I am not yet sure where I shall go then—perhaps to Kashmir or to my own province—Kashmir of course does not mean a holiday.

I am not likely to lose heart in the future of India. The moment I did so I would have no purpose left in life. But I must confess that the last two months' conversations and activities have not cheered me or made me conscious of any major change in the British outlook. There is far too much of the old way of speaking and acting. I do not see anything very attractive emerging out of all this. Perhaps I am wrong.

Sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 708.
2. Pethick-Lawrence had written: "Don't lose heart in the independent India to come out of the constituent assembly. I feel so much depends on your courage in helping to bring it to birth and in guiding its destiny when it is born."

## 28. Quit Quibbling<sup>1</sup>

Why don't they quit quibbling? Why go on issuing these statements? What is the good of their presuming to tell us that independence is subject to two newly stated conditions?<sup>2</sup> I will not serve on the Viceroy's Executive after fighting the Government of India for years. And if our

1. This was Jawaharlal's reply to the correspondent of the *News Chronicle* of London who told him that according to the Cabinet Mission there would be no change for the interim period in the structure of the Government at the Centre except in personnel. From *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 29 May 1946.
2. These were mentioned in the statement of 16 May 1946 of the Cabinet Mission: (i) The responsibilities of the constituent assembly included the protection of minorities. (ii) The constituent assembly would conclude a treaty with the British Government to cover matters arising out of the transfer of power.

provinces do not want to join the groups, who is going to make them join?

Some public declaration that the provincial governments will be masters in their own house seems necessary. The present bureaucratic machinery in India has never been designed to function through democratic process and, while it remains, Indian ministers must have powers to overrule whatever official obstruction they may encounter.

## 29. At the Threshold of a New Era<sup>1</sup>

I have come to Naini Tal to do something, and an injustice has been done to me by making me speak. I have spoken for long now. I am tired of speech-making.

The talks that have been proceeding for the last three months have been tiring. I do not know what the result of all these long consultations will be. Neither do I know the trend of this nor can I disclose anything about it.

However, every now and then problems take a new shape. Still these talks have a bearing on the future of this country.

Revolutionary changes are taking place. The British have ruled over this country for over 150 years. However, that story is now finished.

Now we are at the threshold of a new era. Our hearts are overwhelmed with the joy of the coming freedom, but this does not mean that we are to rest contented. Responsibilities are heavy. We are living in historic times. The old order is dying and a new one is to take its place. There are difficulties, but we have to face them. Whether we take a right or a wrong decision, British rule is to end for good. Nations rise by their own efforts and unity. The future will alone show how far we are competent in shouldering responsibilities that are lying ahead of us. It is unfortunate that there are groups in the country which are demanding concessions for themselves and are indulging in petty squabbles. If India is alive, all of us are alive. So I lay emphasis on national unity and discipline and appeal to the people to be liberal in their dealings with others.

1. Speech at Naini Tal, 8 June 1946. Based on reports from *The Hindustan Times*, 10 June and *The Hindu*, 11 June 1946.



WITH PETHICK-LAWRENCE AND A.V. ALEXANDER IN SINILA, MAY 1946



WITH JINNAH IN SIMLA, MAY 1946

The crux of the matter is how far the people have the strength to control this great country. I have confidence in the people's strength to overcome difficulties that are facing the nation.

We have dreamt of an independent India that will contribute to world peace. Probably the time is not far off when our dreams will be fulfilled. Be prepared for that. Soon we will respond to the call of *Jai Hind* with open hearts.

### 30. Record of Interview of Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad<sup>1</sup>

Maulana Azad said that now that the Congress had to decide finally within a few days what their attitude to the Cabinet delegation's statement should be, there were some points that they would like to mention.

The first of these was the position of European voters in the constituent assembly, more particularly in Bengal and Assam. The Working Committee had been distressed to read the reference to this in the last letter of the Secretary of State. This was a matter of vital importance to the Congress and was a tremendous stumbling-block. The Secretary of State said that the delegation did not see how they could change the position which they felt must stand.

Pandit Nehru said that this meant that the delegation were depriving the Hindu minority in Bengal of six seats; that is to say, six million people would, in effect, be deprived of representation. Sir Stafford Cripps said that whether this situation arose or not would depend on what the Europeans decided to do.

Pandit Nehru said that of course if the European vote was eliminated voluntarily the matter would be satisfactorily settled. The experience of Congress, however, was that the Europeans always supported the Muslim League. Sir Stafford Cripps said that he thought that this was not correct. The attitude of the Europeans had been that, generally speaking, they supported the Government.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that the matter must be left to the Europeans. He felt sure that they could be trusted not to take a partisan attitude. Sir S. Cripps commented that they would be very ill-advised to do anything which would earn them the hostility of either of the two major communities.

1. Delhi, 10 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 853-856.

Pandit Nehru said that if the Europeans decided to vote, but not to elect European representatives, this would not meet the case. It was reported that a prominent European commercial magnate had openly said that the Europeans in Bengal would not elect anyone who was not pro-Muslim League.

Sir Stafford Cripps pointed out that it was not possible for the Europeans to vote for anyone who was not a candidate from the general community.

Azad said that the Congress could hardly take a decision trusting to the goodwill of the Europeans.<sup>2</sup> They must know what the position was going to be. The First Lord said that the Statement of the 16th May could not be altered without arousing all sorts of other claims for alterations. The Sikhs<sup>3</sup> in particular and the Ambedkar Depressed Class<sup>4</sup> were claiming modifications.

Maulana Azad said that the second point which he wished to raise was the question of the provisional government. One very important matter was not referred to in the Viceroy's letter to him of the 30th May, that was the composition of the government. This was a vital matter. Numerous statements had been made in Muslim League circles to the effect that parity was essential. Congress were entirely opposed to parity. Any interim government must be a homogeneous government. The outlook of the Muslim League was to seek to create a deadlock in order to bring about Pakistan. This was the first and most important matter. The question of the distribution of portfolios and the filling of the minority seats were also important, though subsidiary.

2. On behalf of the Europeans of Bengal it had been announced that they would not vote for themselves but would vote for the members of other communities preferably in accordance with any agreement reached between the major political parties. But a fear was expressed that instead of six or seven Europeans being elected for the constituent assembly there might be six or seven Indians who would act according to the dictates of the European Party.
3. The Sikhs feared that the future of the Punjab homeland would be determined in Section B of the constituent assembly, where they would have only four seats, by the Muslim majority. On 10 June 1946, the Sikh Panthic Conference appointed a Council of Action to fight the Cabinet Mission's proposals if they were not modified according to their demands.
4. Ambedkar's Scheduled Castes Federation protested that there was not a single mention of the scheduled castes in the Cabinet Mission plan. It condemned the provisions in the plan for safeguarding the interests of the community as "absolutely illusory and unworthy of serious consideration." Ambedkar cabled to Churchill that the plan was a "shameful betrayal" of the cause of 60 million untouchables and affirmed his dependence on Churchill for safeguarding their interests.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that, as the Maulana knew, this interim government had got to meet an abnormal situation. The great difficulty was the conflict between the two main parties. The government would have to be a coalition of these two parties and it must work in harmony. He felt sure that when it got down to practical work for India it would be possible for it to work harmoniously. He had an assurance from Mr. Jinnah that he would not use his position in the government for partisan ends but to get the government formed it was necessary to make certain concessions to minorities. He had therefore always worked on the basis of 5:5:2 proportions. He would not regard this as in any way a precedent establishing a claim to parity but simply as an expedient for the interim period. He thought that this would be the only way to get an interim government of both parties together. He realised that it was a considerable concession from the Congress point of view but he hoped that they would accept it for the common good of India. On the question of portfolios he was not committed in any way. He thought that it was essential that the key portfolios should be evenly distributed getting the best people in the right places. It might be possible when the government had worked for some little time to make further adjustments. He would take the advice of the two principal parties on the allocation of portfolios though he himself had some ideas on this subject.

The Secretary of State said that the experience of coalitions in the United Kingdom was that whatever the ratio of numbers might be decisions could not be taken against a strong element in one party. If they were, the coalition would not survive. Cabinets did not decide by majority voting. He very much hoped that Congress might be able to accept parity as a temporary expedient. He would like to point out that there was nothing in the delegation's statement that established parity as a principle for the future. He thought that the question of parity was mainly one of prestige. If the Congress took it as a matter of prestige there might be a deadlock which would be very regrettable. Sir S. Cripps said that it was important in setting up a coalition government that both sides should start with a feeling of satisfaction. He thought that the best way of getting a homogeneous government which would pull together would be for the Congress to make a gesture by offering parity.

Pandit Nehru said that if that were the spirit they would be prepared to say let the Muslims run the government, but that did not mean that you would get the best government either on ability or honesty. What was proposed now was not Hindu-Muslim parity, but Muslim League and Congress parity. This cut out all the non-League Muslims who were a considerable element in the country. The Muslim League in

the provincial governments were putting in people who were neither competent nor honest. They had an entirely different outlook to the Congress and did not care for nationalist ideals.

Azad said that 12 portfolios were not enough and this figure was obviously chosen to conciliate Mr. Jinnah. The Viceroy said that the parties must enter the government with a desire to pull together. If they came in in any other spirit the government obviously would not work.

Pandit Nehru said that he was a strong partisan. He had certain ideas he wanted to put through. His difficulty was that other people in the proposed government would only want inertia. The Viceroy said we had to deal with a practical position. Either a coalition government must be formed or there would be a split-up and chaos. In the interim period it would not be possible to carry on through sweeping reforms but there was much that could be done.

Pandit Nehru said that the interim government would have its effect on the work of the constitution-making body. The Congress were going to work for a strong Centre and to break the group system and they would succeed. They did not think that Mr. Jinnah had any real place in the country. The Muslim League and the Congress each represented entirely different outlooks on the work of the constitution-making body and they were bound to have strong differences in the interim government.

The First Lord suggested that Mr. Jinnah had had to swallow a bitter pill in accepting the delegation's proposals. If the problem of India were to be solved the best way was to work together now and rub off the corners which caused friction between the major communities. There was no other way ultimately of their being able to assimilate into a united India nearly 100 million Muslims the majority of whom supported the Muslim League in the elections.

Pandit Nehru said that there might be in the interim government some arrangement as in the union constitution-making body. If the Viceroy considered that any matter raised a major communal issue that matter might require a majority of both communities for its decision. It was very difficult for Congress even to consider this matter of parity because of the strong feeling in the country among their followers. Their own organisation might split up and go to pieces.

The Secretary of State said that he had hoped from the Maulana's letter to Lord Wavell of the 25th May<sup>5</sup> that Congress would accept parity. This letter had said that if the two major matters of the constitution of the interim government and responsibility to the legislature

5. See *ante*, item 24.



were settled, he was confident that the question of composition would give no rise to difficulty. Maulana Azad said that he had repeatedly discussed this question with the Viceroy and had made the position of Congress clear.

Pandit Nehru said that it was frankly beyond the power of Congress to agree to parity. Their supporters would not accept it.

Maulana Azad said that the Congress had to come to a decision. They had met yesterday and thought before doing so they would like to have the delegation's replies on these two matters. Now they must put the position before their Committee and decide.

Pandit Nehru said that he understood that they must report to their Committee as regards the Europeans. The delegation thought it possible that the Europeans might themselves decide not to take any part in the elections and that, as regards parity, they must report that the delegation consider parity essential.

The Viceroy said that this was so. He did not see his way to getting a coalition government without it. In reply to a question from Pandit Nehru he said that he had not made any commitment in regard to parity to Mr. Jinnah. What he had said was based on his estimate of the political probabilities. Maulana Azad said that the other matters they wished to refer to were, firstly, that it was quite essential that the interim government should be considered a provisional national government and not just a continuance of the old Executive Council. Secondly, that in connection with parity it was unjust that the scheduled caste representation should be included in the Congress quota. This would mean that the caste Hindus who were the largest and most important element in the population of India would get a very small share of representation. They would like a larger council of, say, 15 including Nationalist Muslims, a Sikh, a Parsee and an Indian Christian.

The Viceroy said that possibly provision could be made for these communities through the appointment of parliamentary under-secretaries. He realised that this position was very difficult for the Congress but he hoped that they would help him. He believed a national government could be formed and if it worked together it would get rid of some of the communal feeling. Sacrifices would have to be made, however, in order to get it started.

Pandit Nehru said that these two matters seemed to him insuperable.

The Viceroy asked whether Pandit Nehru felt there would be any advantage in his discussing the composition of the interim government with Pandit Nehru and Mr. Jinnah together.

Pandit Nehru said that past discussions with Mr. Jinnah had not been profitable.

The Secretary of State said that he realised that Congress were being asked to make a great sacrifice. He believed, however, that generous acts in the field of statecraft usually redounded to the benefit and advantage of those who made them in the long run.

### 31. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
11 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

The Cabinet delegation and you were good enough to give Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and me yesterday nearly an hour and a quarter during which we discussed some vital questions of the moment. Both of us felt the friendliness that lay behind our talk and the desire to find some way out of the difficulties that face us. But we gathered from that talk that though you recognised the justice of what we said on behalf of the Congress, you were unable to agree to it. The two questions that we discussed yesterday were the right and the desirability of the European members of the respective provincial assemblies to take part in the elections for the constituent assembly, and the question of parity in the proposed provisional national government. In both these matters we are unable to come to an agreement. I have now consulted my Working Committee and discussed with them fully all the aspects of the problem, and more particularly those two matters which have become insuperable obstacles for us.

On May 24th the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution which I conveyed to you. In this resolution we gave our reactions to the statement dated May 16th 1946, which the British Cabinet delegation and you issued on behalf of the British Government. We pointed out what we considered some of the omissions and defects in that statement and we also gave our interpretation of some of its provisions. In a subsequent statement issued by you and the Cabinet delegation our interpretation was not accepted and the oversight was not corrected.

You know, and we have repeatedly emphasised this, that our immediate objective has been and is the independence of India. We have to

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi this letter was withheld.

judge this by every standard. It is obvious that your approach has been far removed from this. We suggested that even though...<sup>2</sup> We are assured that this is a temporary provision and need not be treated as a precedent, but no such assurance can prevent an evil step from having consequences.

In so far as a community may be afraid of a majority overriding it in matters of major communal concern we have suggested a way out which you have adopted in your proposals relating to the federal union. This is that in a major communal matter the decision should be by each community separately. This surely should get over any such fear or suspicion.

We should also like to point out to you that in our opinion the provisional government should consist of at least fifteen members which has been normally the strength of the Executive Council and not twelve as suggested. This will give scope for the representation of various small minorities. We are anxious that every consideration should be paid to these minorities.

The provisional national government will have great difficulties to face and whoever is in charge of it will have a great responsibility to discharge. There is the food crisis which affects the primary necessity of the dumb millions. There is general discontent and unrest in the country. All these problems cannot be faced effectively by a heterogeneous provisional government full of inner conflicts. But we realise that in the existing situation a coalition is desirable and a coalition inevitably means a certain lack of homogeneity. Nevertheless it should be our endeavour to have as homogeneous a national government as possible, composed of able and incorruptible men and women with more or less common objectives in regard to major matters. Unless this is done the ship of state cannot run smoothly nor can it command public confidence. My Committee would not mind a government composed of all Muslims, or all Sikhs, or all Parsees, or all Christians, or all Hindus, even though every one of them is outside the fold of the Congress, provided it consists of men and women of the type referred to above. But communal parity as suggested we are totally unable to accept.

If the position about the European vote and parity remains my Committee are reluctantly compelled to inform you that they are unable to assist in the different tasks before us.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

2. At this place one page is missing in the source.

### 32. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
12 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I am sorry for the slight delay in answering your letter of today's date. Your invitation to me to see you today at 5 p.m. in order to confer with you and Mr. Jinnah about the interim government placed me in a somewhat difficult position. I would gladly meet you at any time, but our official spokesman in regard to such matters is naturally our President, Maulana Azad. He can speak and confer authoritatively, which I cannot do. It is, therefore, proper that he should be in charge on our behalf of any authoritative conversations that might take place. But since you have asked me to come I shall do so. I hope, however, that you will appreciate my position and that I can only talk without authority, which vests in our President and the Working Committee.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 886.

2. In fact, there was no joint meeting as Jinnah declined the invitation.

### 33. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

The talk lasted for an hour and three quarters. Nehru was very friendly throughout and we made some progress on everything except the parity issue.

I showed him a list of proposed portfolios and spoke of certain matters, e.g., why I thought it would be better to omit the Planning and Development Department, what would be the best way to deal with the Information and Arts Department, and one or two other matters.

1. Delhi, 12 June 1946. From *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 886-887.

Nehru said that the choice of portfolios ought not to present any difficulty at all if we could get the persons chosen.

We then had a considerable amount of general talk on the number of portfolios, the objectives of the interim government, the representation of minorities in the government, and so on.

He finally produced a list of 15 names: 5 Congress, (all Hindus), 4 Muslim League, one non-League Muslim, one non-Congress Hindu, one Congress scheduled caste, one Indian Christian, one Sikh, one Congress woman. I said that this list would be quite unacceptable to Mr. Jinnah, and I did not see how I could put it across to him. I promised to keep his list of names entirely to myself since, as he said, he was in a difficult position as he was not President of the Congress and Azad ought to have been in his place. He indicated to me the portfolios which certain of his nominees would like to hold.

He told me that they had had a letter ready to send me yesterday, more or less turning down the whole proposal, I gather; but Gandhi had intervened and it had not been sent. I asked him to see that no letters were sent to me for a day or two, while I saw how we could settle this business.

### 34. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 12th June, which I have just received enquiring after my health. I have now more or less recovered.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has reported to my Committee and me the gist of the conversations<sup>3</sup> between Your Excellency and him. My Committee regret that they are unable to accept your suggestions for the formation of the provisional national government. These tentative suggestions emphasise the principle of parity to which we have been and are

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 914-915.
2. On 12 May 1946, Wavell had written to Maulana Azad that "I am so sorry to hear that you have been unwell and have had to take medical advice. I do hope that you will soon recover your health."
3. See the preceding item.

entirely opposed. In the composition of the cabinet suggested by you there is parity between the Hindus including the scheduled castes and the Muslim League, that is the number of caste Hindus is actually less than the nominees of the Muslim League. The position thus is worse than it was in June 1945 at Simla where, according to your declaration then, there was to be parity between caste Hindus and Muslims, leaving additional seats for the scheduled caste Hindus. The Muslim seats then were not reserved for the Muslim League only but could include non-League Muslims. The present proposal thus puts the Hindus in a very unfair position and at the same time eliminates the non-League Muslims. My Committee are not prepared to accept any such proposal. Indeed we have stated repeatedly we are opposed to parity in any shape or form.

In addition to this parity we are told that there should be a convention requiring that major communal issues should be decided by separate group voting. While we have accepted this principle for long-term arrangements we did so as an effective substitute for other safeguards. In your present proposal, however, both parity and this convention are suggested. This would make the working of the provisional government almost impossible and deadlock a certainty.

As I have often pointed out to you we are strongly of opinion that the provisional government should consist of fifteen members. This is necessary to carry out the administration of the country efficiently as well as to give adequate representation to the smaller minorities. We are anxious that the various minorities should have scope in such a government. The work before the provisional government is likely to be much heavier and more exacting. In your proposals communications include railways, transport, posts, telegraphs and air. It is difficult for us to conceive how all these can be joined together in one portfolio. This would be highly undesirable at any time. With industrial troubles and the possibility of railway strikes this arrangement would be wholly wrong. We think also that planning is an essential department for the Centre. We think, therefore, that the provisional government must consist of fifteen members.

The suggested division of portfolios appears to us to be undesirable and unfair.

My Committee would also like to point out that a coalition government in order to be successful must have some common outlook and programme for the time being. The manner of approach in forming such a government has been such as to leave this out of consideration and my Committee do not feel any confidence that such a coalition can function successfully.

It was our intention to write to you about certain other matters also, but for reasons known to you our letter has been delayed. I shall write to you about these other matters later. My purpose in writing to you now is to convey to you without any delay our reactions on the tentative proposals that you put forward today.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

### 35. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In my letter<sup>2</sup> to you sent yesterday I promised to send you another letter. I am now doing so.

On May 24th the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution<sup>3</sup> which I conveyed to you. In this resolution we gave our reactions to the statement dated May 16, 1946, which the British Cabinet delegation and you issued on behalf of the British Government. We pointed out what were in our opinion some of the omissions and defects in that statement, and we also gave our interpretation of some of its provisions. In a subsequent statement issued by you and the Cabinet delegation our viewpoint was not accepted.

You know, and we have repeatedly emphasised this, that our immediate objective has been and is the independence of India. We have to judge everything by this standard. We suggested that even though no legal change might be made at this stage, independence in practice might be recognised. This has not been agreed to.

In your letter, May 30, 1946, addressed to me, you explained what in your view the status and powers of the interim government would be. This too falls short of what we aim at. Yet the friendly tone of your

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 939-941.

2. See the preceding item.

3. See *ante*, item 23.

letter and our desire to find some way out led us to accept your assurance in these matters.<sup>4</sup> We came to the conclusion also that, unsatisfactory as were many of the provisions of your statement of May 16th, we would try to work them according to our own interpretation and with a view to achieve our objective.

You are no doubt aware of the strong feeling of resentment which exists among large sections of the people against some of the proposals in the statement, notably the idea of grouping. The Frontier Province and Assam have expressed themselves with considerable force against any compulsory grouping. The Sikhs have felt hurt and isolated by these proposals and are considerably agitated. Being a minority in the Punjab, they become still more helpless, as far as numbers go, in Section B. We appreciated all these objections especially as we ourselves shared them. Nevertheless, we hoped that according to our interpretation of the clauses relating to grouping, which we still hold is the correct interpretation, for any other interpretation would endanger the basic principle of provincial autonomy, we might be able to get over some of the obvious difficulties.

But two insuperable obstacles remained and we had hoped that you would be able to remove them. One of these related to the part that European members of the provincial assemblies might play in the election to the constituent assembly. We have no objection to Englishmen or Europeans as such, but we do have a strong objection to persons, who are foreigners and non-nationals and who claim to belong to the ruling race, participating in and influencing the elections to the constituent assembly. The Cabinet delegation's statement lays down clearly that the future constitution of India has to be decided by Indians. 'The basic principle of the statement of May 16th was the election of a member of the constituent assembly to represent one million inhabitants. On this basis, the representatives of 146,000 Muslims in Orissa and 180,000 Hindus and 58,000 Sikhs in the North West Frontier Province have not been given the right to elect any member to the constituent assembly. The European population of Bengal and Assam number only 21,000, but their representatives can return to the constituent assembly by their own vote 7 out of 34 members, thus appropriating to themselves the right to represent 7 millions. They are returned to the provincial assemblies by a separate electorate of their own and have been given fan-

4. In his letter of 30 May 1946 to Maulana Azad, Wavell offered "to cooperate in a manner which will give India a sense of freedom from external control and will prepare for complete freedom as soon as the new constitution is made."



tastic weightage. This representation of Europeans in the constituent assembly will be at the cost of non-Muslims, that is mainly Hindus, who are already a minority in Bengal. To make a minority suffer in this way is surely utterly wrong. Apart from the question of principle, it is a matter of the utmost importance in practice and may well affect the future both of Bengal and Assam. The Congress Working Committee attach the greatest importance to this. We would like to add that even if the Europeans themselves do not stand for election, but merely vote, the results will be equally bad. The Cabinet delegation have informed us that beyond promising to use their persuasive powers they could not hold out any assurance to us that these European members would not exercise the right which, we are advised, they do not possess under the statement of May 16th. But if the delegation hold otherwise, as evidently they do, we cannot contemplate a legal fight for their exclusion at the threshold of the constituent assembly. Therefore, a clear announcement is necessary that they will not take part as voters or candidates in the election to the constituent assembly. We cannot depend on grace or goodwill where rights are concerned.

Equally important, in our view, is the question of parity in the proposed provisional national government. I have already written to you on this subject. This parity, or by whatever other name it may be called, has been opposed by us throughout and we consider it a dangerous innovation which, instead of working for harmony, will be a source of continuous conflict and trouble. It may well poison our future as other separatist steps in the past have poisoned our public life. We are told that this is a temporary provision and need not be treated as a precedent, but no such assurance can prevent an evil step from having evil consequences. We are convinced that even the immediate results of any such provision will be harmful.

If the position about the European vote and parity remains, my Committee are reluctantly compelled to inform you that they will not be able to assist you in the difficult tasks ahead.

The talk we had with you today has not made any substantial difference to the fundamental position. We have noted that, according to your new suggestions, the proposed woman member<sup>s</sup> might be replaced by a Hindu, thus increasing the Hindu members, including scheduled caste representatives, to six. We would be sorry not to have a woman member, but apart from this, the new proposal maintains the old Sinla (1945) formula of parity between caste Hindus and Muslims, with this important qualification that now Muslims are supposed to mean members of the

Muslim League. We are unable to agree to this proposal and we are still convinced that the provisional government must consist of 15 members and that there should be no kind of parity in their selection.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

### 36. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In the course of our talk<sup>2</sup> today you mentioned that among the Muslim League nominees suggested for the provisional government was one<sup>3</sup> from the North West Frontier Province who had recently been defeated at the provincial elections. This was said by you confidentially and we shall of course treat it as such. But I feel I must inform you, to avoid any possibility of misunderstanding, that any such name will be considered objectionable by us. This objection is not personal, but we feel that the name is suggested for entirely political reasons and we cannot agree to any such course.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 941.
2. In his diary entry for 14 June 1946 Wavell wrote: "At noon I had an hour with Azad and Nehru. All the old ground was gone over again without much result.... They went away finally saying they would recommend the proposal to the Working Committee without much hope." See *Wavell: The Viceroy's Journal*, p. 293.
3. Sardar Abdur Rab Khan Nishtar.

### 37. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
16 June 1946

I have received your two letters<sup>2</sup> of June 15th.

I note what you say about grouping. We abide by the interpretation we have put upon it.

As regards Europeans, we are clear that even on a legal interpretation of the statement of May 16th, apart from other considerations, they have not the right to participate in the elections to the constituent assembly. I am glad you expect a satisfactory solution of this problem.

We have endeavoured in our letter<sup>3</sup> and in the course of our talks to state clearly what our position is in regard to any kind of parity. You will remember that parity was mentioned and considered at the first Simla Conference. That parity was exactly the same as is now suggested by you, that is, parity between caste Hindus and Muslims. Owing to the stress of war and other conditions then existing, we were prepared to accept this only for that occasion. It was not to be used as precedent. Moreover it was subject to the inclusion of at least one Nationalist Muslim. Now conditions have entirely changed and we have to consider the question in another context, that of approaching independence and constituent assembly. As we have written to you, in this context and in present circumstances we consider this kind of parity unfair and likely to lead to difficulties. The whole scheme proposed by you in the statement of May 16th is based on absence of weightage. And yet, in the proposed provisional government, there is this weightage, in addition to other far-reaching communal safeguards.

We have tried our utmost to arrive at a satisfactory settlement and we shall not despair of it. But such a settlement, in order to be endur-

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 949-950.
2. On 15 June 1946, Wavell wrote two letters in reply. In the first letter he had stated: "I must assume from the last paragraph of your letter that my attempt to negotiate an agreement between the two major parties on the composition of the interim government has failed. The Cabinet delegation and I have therefore decided to issue tomorrow a statement on the action we propose to take." In the second letter Wavell wrote to say that grouping was not compulsory and the only provision made was that representatives of certain provinces should meet in sections so that they could decide whether or not they wished to form groups. Furthermore, individual provinces would still have liberty to opt out of their group if they so decided.
3. See *ante*, item 35.

ing, must be based on strong foundations. So far as the statement of May 16th is concerned our main difficulty, as we wrote to you, was the European vote. If this matter is settled, as now appears likely, then this difficulty also goes.

The second and remaining difficulty relates to the proposals for the provisional government which have to be considered together with the statement. The two cannot be separated. These proposals have thus far been unacceptable to us, but if a satisfactory settlement in regard to them is arrived at, we would be in a position to shoulder the burden.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

### 38. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
16 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received your letter of today's date inviting me to join the proposed interim government.<sup>2</sup> I thank you for this invitation. The matter is being considered by the Congress Working Committee and I shall write after they reach a decision.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 955.

2. The Cabinet Mission's plan to see the interim government established and the process of constitution-making expedited was contained in an announcement of 16 June 1946 providing for a representative team of 14 of whom six would be Congressmen and five Muslim Leaguers. Invitations were issued by the Viceroy to six Congressmen—Jawaharlal, Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, C. Rajagopalachari, Hare Krishna Mchtab, (all five caste-Hindus) and Jagjivan Ram, President, Depressed Classes League, and five Muslim Leaguers—Jinnah, Liaquat Ali, Nazimuddin, Mohamad Ismail and Abdur Rab Nishtar; the remaining three were Baldev Singh, John Matthai and N.P. Engineer. The Viceroy in issuing the invitations had stated that the constitution-making would proceed in accordance with the statement of May 16—the setting up of a union centre with grouping of provinces i.e. Assam with Bengal, and North West Frontier with Punjab, Sind and Baluchistan.

## **THE CABINET MISSION AND AFTER**

### **III. The Interim Government and the Constituent Assembly**



## 1. To Frank Anthony<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
June 18, 1946

Dear Mr. Anthony,"

I have received your letter of the 18th June together with the copy of your letter to Mahatma Gandhi. I am wholly at one with you in your desire that justice should be done to your community. In the matter of the proposed interim government, however, you will realise that we have not got much say in the matter at the present stage. I do not yet know what our final decision will be in regard to it. But obviously no major changes can be made now. We either accept or reject, may be with some minor changes.

While I agree with you that your community has as much right as any other of the smaller minorities in India, you will no doubt appreciate that no places can be reserved for any particular community in every central government.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. R. Frank Anthony (b. 1908); President-in-Chief, All India Anglo-Indian Association since 1942; member, Central Legislative Assembly, 1942, of Constituent Assembly, 1946, and of Lok Sabha, 1952-77.

## 2. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal and A.K. Azad<sup>1</sup>

They began by saying that there were several things that they did not like about the latest statement. They said that while one more member had been added he was an official; I said that Engineer<sup>2</sup> was not an official,

1. Delhi, 18 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 969-970.
2. N.P. Engineer (1883-1980); Advocate-General of Bombay, 1942-45; Advocate-General of India, 1945-50; counsel for the prosecution in the I.N.A. trials.

i.e. that he had never belonged to any of the services, though he was at the moment holding an official position. They then complained about not having any non-League Muslim in the government, also that I had nominated Nishtar<sup>3</sup> in spite of their known objections to him. Nehru also said that the new national government must have an entirely different outlook to the old Executive Council, and so forth.

When a certain amount of steam had been blown off in this way, it all came down to the following:

They want to substitute Sarat Bose for Mehtab.<sup>4</sup> After some discussion, in which I gave my reasons for preferring Mehtab, I agreed to accept this.

They indicated that they might wish to substitute a Muslim non-League for one of the Congress Hindus. I asked if this would be Zakir Husain; and while they said they could not give me the name until after the meeting this evening, I gathered that this was so. I said that I thought it would raise great difficulties if they did this, but that if they were determined to put it forward, I would consider it.

They were awaiting the arrival of Abdul Chaffar Khan to decide whether they would object to Nishtar; but indicated that they thought there would be no difficulty about this. I said that I hoped not, as I could not accept the exclusion of Nishtar.

Nehru then told me that he was proposing to leave by air tomorrow morning for Kashmir; he was flying to Pindi and thence going by car with some lawyers for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah. I said that I thought that this would be most unwise, and that it was not the period when he should absent himself from Delhi. He seemed however set on going, unless the Kashmir Government could be induced to postpone the trial.<sup>5</sup>

They both seemed quite friendly, but a little worried.

3. Sardar Abdur Rab Nishtar (1899-1958); member, Legislative Assembly, N.W.F.P. from 1937; Finance Minister, N.W.F.P., 1943-45; defeated by a Congress candidate in the 1945 provincial elections; Minister in the Government of Pakistan, 1947-49 and 1951-53; President, Pakistan Muslim League, 1956.
4. The Congress favoured the inclusion of Sarat Chandra Bose in place of Hare Krishna Mehtab, who, it was said, could not be spared from his post of Prime Minister of Orissa.
5. The Kashmir Government had banned Jawaharlal's entry into the State and when he crossed the frontier on 20 June 1946 at Domel he was arrested.



### 3. A.K. Azad's Letter to Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
21 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have your Excellency's letter<sup>2</sup> of 20th June 1946. I appreciate your anxiety to come to an early decision regarding the formation of an interim government and I can assure you that my Working Committee fully share your anxiety. A new difficulty, in addition to the old ones, has however been created by the publication in the press of the alleged contents of Mr. Jinnah's letter<sup>3</sup> to you in which he raises objection to the Congress nominations in the interim cabinet. It will be of great assistance to the Working Committee in coming to a decision if they could have copies of these alleged letters and your reply thereto as they deal with vital matters which we have to consider.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, p. 999.
2. Wavell wrote that as the Cabinet Mission could not prolong its stay in India he would ask "your Working Committee to let us have a final answer as soon as possible to the proposals made in our statement on June 16th."
3. Jinnah wrote to Wavell on 19 June 1946 declining to commit the Muslim League to acceptance or rejection of the union interim government scheme until the Congress had come to a decision on the whole subject of the long-term constitutional proposals as well as the interim scheme. Jinnah insisted that he had received an assurance from Wavell at Simla in May 1946 that the principle of parity between the Muslim League and the Congress would be maintained. This principle, he contended, had since been unilaterally modified by the inclusion of a member of the Congress party representing the scheduled castes to the proposed cabinet. He sought an assurance that no changes to the representation of minorities in the interim government would be made without the consent of the Muslim League.
4. In his reply Wavell stated that the operative part of his reply dated 20 June 1946 to Jinnah was that "until I have received acceptances from those invited to take office in the interim government, the names in the statement cannot be regarded as final. But no change in principle will be made in the statement without the consent of the two major parties."

#### **4. Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Representatives of the Congress<sup>1</sup>**

The Congress were represented by Maulana Azad, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

The Secretary of State in an opening statement said that before the Congress reached final decisions the delegation were anxious to be sure that there was no misunderstanding of their position. They quite appreciated the importance which Congress attached to the recognition of their national character, but they did hope that in this particular instance Congress would see their way not to make a demand for the inclusion of a Muslim among the Congress representatives in the interim government, though without in any way creating a precedent or approving a principle.

The delegation wished to make it quite clear that they had not given any assurance to Mr. Jinnah or the Muslim League that they accepted the view, which Mr. Jinnah had advanced, that the Muslim League represents all Muslim political opinion and that no other party except the Muslim League has any right to nominate a Muslim for a political post.

It had been made clear to Mr. Jinnah that the delegation did not accept this point of view. For the purpose, however, of forming this particular coalition government the delegation had taken into account all the arguments that had been advanced to them by both parties up to the date on which they made their statement of the 16th June. In the light of those arguments they had produced a list of persons whom they thought most likely to form the basis of a sound coalition which would be acceptable to both parties.

The Secretary of State thought that the Congress representatives were entitled to know that the delegation were not asking them to forgo their principles or to abandon their status as a national party, but nevertheless they did hope that the Congress would not press this claim in this particular instance. He thought that if the Congress did so they would thereby jeopardise the whole future of India.

Maulana Azad said that the particular matter the Secretary of State referred to was one of the other important matters which have now come up. The whole thing, however, had to be seen together. This matter of the appointment of a Nationalist Muslim was one on which

1. Delhi, 23 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1012-1018.

the Congress had expressed themselves clearly throughout. It was not a temporary matter but one which dealt with the whole conception of the future. Any weakening on the Congress Party's conception of a strong India by any interim parity would create conditions which would not only make administrative difficulties but would formulate conditions in certain matters which they could not get rid of in the future, and there was no immediate gain to be obtained which would be adequate to set against that. It was stated in answer to certain objections the Congress had raised that Congress had no right to interfere with Muslim League selections, yet now exactly the same thing has been done about selections which the Congress might make. So the Muslim League could interfere with the Congress selections while Congress were told that they cannot interfere with the Muslim League selections, although the Muslim League are not a political party in the full sense of the word. That is to say, they are definitely a limited communal party. The Congress protested against parity but this was something more than that. It was just a veto on future work of a kind which made honourable coalition or cooperation quite impossible.

The Secretary of State said that no objection had been raised when the Congress had wished to substitute Mr. Sarat Bose for Mr. Mehtab, and there was no question of the Muslim League being asked to agree to that. But the change they now wanted to make was something which altered the basis of the delegation's proposals and was likely, in the delegation's opinion, to prevent the formation of a coalition government.

Pandit Nehru said that the delegation appeared to start with the presumption that progress could only be made with the cooperation of the Muslim League. The Congress disagreed with that view. They thought that under what was proposed the Muslim League would secure a vantage point from which they could veto anything that really mattered and bring the whole government into a state of frustration. The Secretary of State said that he was present when Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru had themselves suggested that there should be a communal majority for important communal decisions. He certainly understood them to go as far, if not farther, in agreeing to that as the delegation had gone. Pandit Nehru said that their agreement was linked with the proposal that the interim government should be responsible to the Legislative Assembly. Now it was linked to parity. He was unable to see how a government on this basis could function. Sir Stafford Cripps suggested that it was in practice a principle in all coalitions that in fact you must get the consent of both major parties to all major matters which were decided. If not, the coalition broke down. Pandit Nehru said that this

was different. Where there was a communal basis, every day there would be obstruction on communal grounds.

His Excellency the Viceroy said that he would like to be sure there was no misunderstanding on this point. He had discussed it three times with the Congress representatives. On the first occasion he had explained that he did not see how the government could be responsible to the legislature. He had understood then that the Congress were prepared to agree to the communal majority provision. On the second occasion the Congress representatives had, as he understood it, accepted this proposition in connection with a council of 15. On the third occasion he understood them to agree that in fact no major matter could be passed without the assent of the two major parties. He thought it was a great exaggeration to say this provision would be used every day. Of the issues that had come before his council in recent months he could hardly think of any which in fact raised a major communal issue. He thought that the Congress were assuming too readily that the other party was going to behave unreasonably. If everyone behaved unreasonably the coalition would break up, and something else would have to be tried. It seemed to him that it was well worth trying a coalition government and seeing how it worked.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that the fact that Congress Muslims were included in Provincial Governments of itself demonstrated the national character of Congress, and the fact that a Congress Muslim was not included at the Centre would not therefore destroy that conception. Pandit Nehru said that as far as the Muslim League was concerned a Nationalist Muslim was regarded as an outcaste.

Maulana Azad said that at the 1945 conference at Simla Jinnah had agreed that the Congress could appoint who it liked provided that it did not touch upon his quota. Now he was making a further demand that no Muslim should be included even among the Congress quota, without his approval. Sardar Patel said that Congress Muslims would say that they had better leave the Congress if, because of their membership of it, they were excluded from political positions. Sir Stafford Cripps said that the delegation were not suggesting that Congress Muslims should be so excluded, but merely asking whether under the peculiar circumstances the Congress could not refrain from pressing for the inclusion of a Congress Muslim in the interim government. Sardar Patel said that, put shortly, this meant that the proposed coalition government could not be formed because Jinnah objected to the appointment of a Congress Muslim. If this was to prevail, then Jinnah still had a veto in spite of

what the Prime Minister had said before the Mission came out.<sup>2</sup> His Excellency the Viceroy said that Mr. Jinnah had constantly complained to him that the delegation had made too many concessions to Congress. It was a mistake to think that the delegation had yielded to Mr. Jinnah on all points. But on occasions of this sort, the stronger party was in a position to make a concession, and it might very well pay them to do so.

Sir Stafford Cripps said that the delegation had made their statement of the 16th June as a compromise after negotiations for agreement between the parties had failed. They had taken into account the position of the two parties as put before them up to the date of the statement. Up to that time the Congress had been pressing for a council of 15, and for the inclusion of an additional caste Hindu. They had said that they could not agree to parity, either between caste Hindus and Muslims or between the Muslim League and Congress. In support of this Sir Stafford read an extract from the Congress President's letter of the 14th June. In drawing up the list of names in the statement of the 16th June, the delegation had gone as far as they could to meet what they thought the Congress wanted at that time. The Congress had made no reference to their desire that a Congress Muslim should be appointed, and, though the point may have been dormant in their minds, it was not brought to the delegation's attention. Pandit Nehru said that one reason for this was that in informal talks with His Excellency the Viceroy there had been discussion of the inclusion of Zakir Husain. Indeed, his name had first been suggested by the Viceroy. This would have met sufficiently the point of principle that the Muslim League should not have the exclusive right to nominate Muslims, and the Congress did not wish to make the position more difficult by pressing for a Congress Muslim.

The First Lord said that the delegation were entitled to make certain deductions from the position of the two parties as stated to them up to the time when they drew up the statement. The Congress were then pressing for a council of 15 with 6 caste Hindus and one Congress scheduled caste included. When the delegation included in their list 5 Congress caste Hindus and one Congress scheduled caste in a total of 14, it naturally came as a surprise to them when this entirely new point about the inclusion of Congress Muslims was raised. Pandit Nehru said that the delegation had perhaps been in ignorance of what had passed in the informal talks between the Congress and His Excellency the Viceroy. He had given the Viceroy a list of names which included Zakir Husain. The Viceroy said that Pandit Nehru had specially asked

2. Attlee had stated that the British Government would not allow the minority to place a veto on the advance of the majority.

that these names should be kept entirely confidential, and he had therefore not disclosed them to his colleagues on the delegation. He had told Pandit Nehru that the list he had put in would be totally unacceptable to Mr. Jinnah, and that Zakir Husain could certainly not be included in the Muslim quota. There had at one stage been the possibility of including him, balanced by a non-Congress Hindu. He was very sorry if any misunderstanding had arisen over this. If it had, it was no doubt his fault. Pandit Nehru said that he had raised the question with the Viceroy of the inclusion of a Muslim in the Congress quota. The Viceroy had asked him who he had in mind. He had given a hint that it might be a Congress Muslim. The Viceroy said that his recollection was that he had asked Pandit Nehru whether the person in question was Zakir Husain. Pandit Nehru did not commit himself, but indicated that that was possible. Consequently he had, when seeing Mr. Jinnah later that day, mentioned this possibility to him. Mr. Jinnah had reacted very strongly against it.

The First Lord said that the delegation had every right to stand on their *bona fides* in the matter of the list of names included in the statement of June 16th. Up to that point they had no indication at all that the Congress would ask for the inclusion of a Nationalist Muslim, and on the correspondence and the fact available to them they were entitled to put in six recognised Congress Hindu names. It seemed to them that it would be an absolute tragedy in the eyes of the world if these prolonged negotiations came to a break on this matter in this way.

Pandit Nehru said that they were discussing the formation of a government which was to be a very different thing from the existing Executive Council. In practice it would have to resign if it did not have the support of the legislature and the Viceroy would have to be in a formal position as head of the government. The government must therefore be formed in a new way in consonance with its character. The Congress claimed that all the appointments to it should be made in consultation with them, except the places to be given to the Muslim League. The Viceroy said that he had never accepted the position that he handed over a block of seats in the government to Congress for them to fill as they pleased. He would be the responsible head of the government. Sir Stafford Cripps said that the point was that an attempt to form a government by agreement had failed, and they had therefore drawn up this list as something which they thought might be acceptable to both sides.

The Secretary of State said that he had come out to India with the intention of transferring power from his country to India, but he did not think that the moment had come for a complete and instantaneous

transfer. For the moment the Viceroy must remain the head of the government. Pandit Nehru said that the Congress accepted that. The Congress could moderate its demands provided that what was done was moving in the direction of creating a strong Indian nation, but if something were introduced which got in the way of that objective, they could not accept it. The Secretary of State said that it seemed to him that the greatest obstacle to India going forward towards independence was the inability to get started. The value of getting a start made was so great as to be worth not the sacrifice of a principle but abstinence from enforcing it for the time being. Suppose that the Congress representatives persuaded the delegation to agree to the inclusion of a Congress Muslim. If that occurred he did not believe that Mr. Jinnah would accept it, and there would be no coalition government. He believed it was really in the best interests of Congress and of India to act courageously and to begin by accepting the conditions under which a coalition would be possible. A solution of the communal problem in India had to be found, and for the parties to work together on practical problems provided the best hope.

Pandit Nehru said that the leaders of Congress had been working for that objective for thirty years, but always they were faced with this same obstacle to a strong and united India. That objective was undermined most of all by the communal attack on Muslims who supported the national ideal, and the Congress could not desert those Muslims who had done so. The Viceroy said that the Congress had itself admitted that the Muslims could not be coerced. The Secretary of State said that the delegation in their statement of May 16th had gone a considerable way to support the Congress in their objective of a united India, and they had given cogent reasons against a sovereign Pakistan.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, they had not accepted the principle of parity, either in their long-term proposals or in the interim period. It might seem to Congress that the delegation were not sufficiently sympathetic to their standpoint, but to the delegation itself it seemed that they were holding the balance. This they only did because Indians were unable to settle these matters themselves. He personally felt that he had been trying to get a united India for Indians, but he could only hope to do it if he was not prevented from making the concessions which he was convinced were necessary.

3. The statement had rejected the idea of "a separate and fully independent sovereign state of Pakistan." It was pointed out that a Pakistan of six provinces, as demanded by the Muslim League, would not solve the problem of communal minorities since twenty million Muslims would still remain in India and there would be non-Muslim minorities in Pakistan to the extent of 38 per cent of the population in the western part and 48 per cent in the eastern part.

If the Congress did not give him the easements necessary to enable him to get Mr. Jinnah to come in, they defeated not his purpose but their own. He emphasised again that no assurance had been given to Mr. Jinnah on this matter of the inclusion of a Congress Muslim, but he was convinced that if the Congress wanted a coalition the way to get it was to abstain from pressing this point. Sardar Patel said that to do so would force all the Muslims out of the Congress. The Secretary of State said that the Viceroy had set himself against this principle and would use all his authority to see that it was not established as a principle. The First Lord said that the Congress would be completely justified on paragraph 5<sup>1</sup> of the statement of the 16th June, in saying that they had not conceded in such a principle. It was specifically stated in that paragraph that the composition of the Government provided no precedent for the future. It had been said that there would be a strong reaction among the supporters of Congress if no Congress Muslim were included. He ventured to think that there would be a much bigger and more far-reaching reaction from a breakdown, while if there were a settlement of these matters there would be immense and widespread relief. Pandit Nehru said that the four representatives of Congress there present were old campaigners and thought that collectively they had some influence with their followers, but they did not think that even all of them together would be able to get the Congress to agree to what the delegation desired.

4. It stated: "The composition of the interim government is in no way to be taken as a precedent for the solution of any other communal question. It is an expedient put forward to solve the present difficulty only, and to obtain the best available coalition government."

## 5. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have just received the telephone message sent on your behalf asking me to communicate immediately the decision of the Congress Working Committee in regard to the proposals for the provisional government.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1025-1026.



The decision was in fact taken yesterday but we felt that it would be better if we wrote to you fully on all aspects of the proposals made by you and the Cabinet delegation. The Working Committee have been sitting almost continuously and will be meeting at 2 p.m. again today. After full consideration and deliberation they have been reluctantly obliged to decide against the acceptance of the interim government proposals as framed by you. A detailed and reasoned reply will follow later.

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

## 6. A.K. Azad's Letter to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
25 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Ever since the receipt of your statement of June 16th, my Committee have been considering it from day to day and have given long and anxious thought to your proposals and to the invitations you have issued to individuals to form the provisional national government. Because of our desire to find some way out of the present most unsatisfactory situation, we have tried our utmost to appreciate your approach and viewpoint. In the course of our conversations we have already pointed out to you our difficulties. Unfortunately these difficulties have been increased by the recent correspondence.

The Congress, as you are aware, is a national organisation including in its fold the members of all religious and communities in India. For more than half a century it has laboured for the freedom of India and for equal rights for all Indians. The link that has brought all these various groups and communities together within the fold of the Congress is the passionate desire for national independence, economic advance, and social equality. It is from this point of view that we have to judge every proposal. We hoped that a provisional national government would be formed which would give effect in practice to this independence. Appreciating some of your difficulties, we did not press for any statutory

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1032-1036.

change introducing independence immediately, but we did expect a *de facto* change in the character of the government making for independence in action. The status and powers of the provisional government were thus important. In our view this was going to be something entirely different from the Viceroy's Executive Council. It was to represent a new outlook, new methods of work and a new psychological approach by India to both domestic and external problems. Your letter dated 30th May 1946 gave us certain assurances about the status and powers of the provisional government. These did not go far enough, according to our thinking, but we appreciated the friendly tone of that letter and decided to accept the assurances and not to press this particular matter any further.

The important question of the composition of the provisional government remained. In this connection we emphasised that we could not accept anything in the nature of "parity" even as a temporary expedient and pointed out that the provisional government should consist of fifteen members to enable the administration of the country to be carried on efficiently and the smaller minorities to be represented in it. Some mention of names was made and on our part suggestions were put before you informally, including the name of a non-League Muslim.

In your statement of June 16th, some of the names suggested came as a surprise to us. Several changes had been made from the provisional list prepared by the Congress. The manner of preparing your list and presenting it as an accomplished fact seemed to us to indicate a wrong approach to the problem. One of the names included had not been previously mentioned at all and was that of a person holding an official position and not known to be associated with any public activity. We have no personal objection to him, but we think that the inclusion of such a name particularly without any previous reference or consultation, was undesirable and indicated a wrong approach to the problem.

Then again a name from our list was excluded and in his place another of our colleagues was put in, but as you have said that this can be rectified, I need not say more about it.

One outstanding feature of this list was the non-inclusion of any Nationalist Muslim. We felt that this was a grave omission. We wanted to suggest the name of a Muslim to take the place of one of the Congress names on the list. We felt that no one could possibly object to our changing the name of one of our own men. Indeed when I had drawn your attention to the fact that among the Muslim League nominees was included the name of a person, who had actually lost in the recent elections in the Frontier Province and whose name we felt had been placed there for political reasons, you wrote to me as follows: "I

am afraid that I cannot accept the right of the Congress to object to the names put forward by the Muslim League, any more than I would accept similar objections from the other side. The test must be that of ability." But before we could make our suggestion I received your letter of the 22nd June which surprised us greatly.<sup>2</sup> You had written this letter on the basis of some press reports. You told us that the Cabinet Mission and you were not prepared to accept a request for the inclusion of a Muslim chosen by the Congress among the representatives of the Congress in the interim government. This seemed to us an extraordinary decision. It was in direct opposition to your own statement quoted above. It meant that the Congress could not freely choose even its own nominees. The fact that this was not to be taken as a precedent made hardly any difference. Even a temporary departure from such a vital principle could not be accepted by us at any time or place and in any circumstances.

In your letter of the 21st June, you gave certain questions framed by Mr. Jinnah in his letter, dated 19th June, and your replies to them. We have not seen Mr. Jinnah's full letter. In Question 3 reference is made to "representation of the four minorities, viz., the scheduled castes, the Sikhs, the Indian Christians and the Parsees", and it is asked as to "who will fill in vacancies caused in these groups, and whether in filling up the vacancies the leader of the Muslim League will be consulted and his consent obtained".

In your answer you say: "If any vacancy occurs among the seats at present allotted to representatives of the minorities, I shall naturally consult both the main parties before filling it." Mr. Jinnah has thus included the scheduled castes among the minorities and presumably you have agreed with this view. So far as we are concerned, we repudiate this view and consider the scheduled castes as integral parts of Hindu society. You also, in your letter of June 15th, treated the scheduled castes as Hindus. You pointed out that in your proposal there was no "parity" either between Hindus and Muslims or between the Congress and the Muslim League inasmuch as there were to be six Hindus belonging to the Congress, as against five Muslims belonging to the League. One of the six Hindus belonged to the scheduled castes. We are in any

2. Wavell wrote on 22 June 1946: "I understand from press reports that there is strong feeling in Congress circles that the party should insist on their right to include a Muslim of their own choice among the representatives of the Congress in the interim government." The Cabinet Mission and he would be unable to accept a Congress Muslim in the interim government but claimed no precedent would be thereby established.

case not agreeable to the leader of a party, which claims to represent a community which is a minority, interfering with the selection of names from either the scheduled castes, whose representation you counted as falling within the Congress quota, or with the selection of representatives of the minorities mentioned.

In Question 4 the scheduled castes are again referred to as a minority and it is asked whether the proportion of members of the government community-wise as provided in the proposals will be maintained. Your answer is that the proportion will not be changed without agreement of the two major parties. Here again one communal group functioning admittedly as such is given a power to veto changes in other groups with which it has no concern. We may desire, if opportunity offers itself, to increase the representation of the scheduled castes, or to give representation, when it is possible, to another minority, for example the Anglo-Indians. All this would depend on the consent of the Muslim League. We cannot agree to this. We may add that your answers restrict the Congress representation to caste Hindus and make it equal to that of the League.

Finally, you state in answer to Question 5 that "no decision of a major communal issue could be taken by the interim government if the majority of either of the main parties were opposed to it." You further say that you had pointed this out to the Congress President and he had agreed that the Congress appreciated this point. In this connection I desire to point out that we had accepted this principle for the long-term arrangement in the union legislature and it could possibly be applied to the provisional government if it was responsible to the legislature and was composed of representatives on the population basis of major communities. It could not be applied to the provisional government formed on a different basis altogether. It was pointed out by us in my letter of the 15th June 1946, that it would make administration impossible and deadlocks a certainty. Even in the question as framed by Mr. Jinnah it is stated that "in view of the substitution of 14 now proposed for the original 12", no major communal issues should be decided if the majority of the Muslim members are opposed to it. Thus this question arose after the substitution of 14 for 12, i.e., after your statement of June 16th. In this statement no mention is made of this rule. This very important change has been introduced, almost casually and certainly without our consent. This again gives the power of veto or obstruction to the Muslim League in the provisional government.

We have stated above our objections to your proposals of June 16th, as well as to your answers to the questions framed by Mr. Jinnah. These

defects are grave and would render the working of the provisional government difficult and deadlocks a certainty. In the circumstances your proposals cannot fulfil the immediate requirements of the situation or further the cause we hold dear.

My Committee have, therefore, reluctantly come to the conclusion that they are unable to assist you in forming a provisional government as proposed in your statement of June 16th, 1946.

With regard to the proposals made in the statement of May 16th, 1946, relating to the formation and functioning of the constitution-making body, the Working Committee of the Congress passed a resolution on the 24th May 1946, and conversations and correspondence have taken place between Your Excellency and the Cabinet Mission on the one side and myself and some of my colleagues on the other. In these we have pointed out what in our opinion were the defects in the proposals. We also gave our interpretation of some of the provisions of the statement. While adhering to our views, we accept your proposals and are prepared to work them with a view to achieve our objective. We would add, however, that the successful working of the constituent assembly will largely depend on the formation of a satisfactory provisional government.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
A.K. Azad

3. Soon after receiving this letter Wavell informed Jinnah that the Congress had rejected the proposal for an interim government. Immediately Jinnah got the Muslim League to accept it and claimed that the Viceroy was bound by the statement of 16 June 1946 to ignore the Congress and form a government with such parties as were willing to join. When the Cabinet Mission rejected his demand he charged the Viceroy and the Cabinet Mission with breach of faith. "Statesmen should not eat their words".

## 7. To Niranjan Singh Gill<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
25 June 1946

My dear Colonel Gill,

Thank you for your letter of the 23rd. The Kashmir incident has had good results so far as I am concerned. The matter is not done with yet

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

and I propose to return to Kashmir within a week or so. What will happen then I do not know. But I would be surprised if any further obstruction is placed in my way. I am sure that if any necessity arises the Sikhs will help in every way.

I have read your letter to the Maulana Sahab and your resolutions.<sup>2</sup> As you perhaps know, we have rejected the proposals for a provisional government. So far as the long-term proposals are concerned we are accepting them subject to our own interpretations. It is possible that further attempts might be made in the near future for the establishment of a provisional government.

Whatever happens, I entirely agree with you that the Congress and the Sikhs should cooperate fully. We appreciate the feelings of the Sikhs in this matter and we would like to go as far as we can to protect their interests. The best way to insure this is to remain in touch with each other, and to confer frequently about matters of common concern. If this contact is maintained, as I hope it will be, then there is no chance of misunderstanding. Obviously it is to the interest of the Sikhs to have the powerful cooperation and support of the Congress. Obviously also the Congress must pay full attention to the needs and desires of the Sikhs. If you have any fresh idea on the subject or when any new difficulty arises, I hope you will immediately inform us so that we can try to meet it.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The United Sikh Panthic Board decided on 22 June 1946 that Baldev Singh, who had been invited by Wavell to join the interim government, should not do so.

## 8. Interpretation of Disputed Points<sup>1</sup>

On May 24, the Working Committee passed a resolution<sup>2</sup> on the statement dated May 16 issued by the British Cabinet delegation and the

1. Resolution of the Congress Working Committee drafted by Jawaharlal, 25 June 1946 and passed the next day. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 June 1946.
2. See *ante*, pp. 179-182.

Viceroy. In this resolution, they pointed out some defects in the statement and gave their own interpretation of certain parts of it.

Since then, the Committee have been continuously engaged in giving earnest consideration to the proposals made on behalf of the British Government in the statements of May 16 and June 16, and have considered the correspondence in regard to them between the Congress President and members of the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. The Committee have examined both these sets of proposals from the point of view of the Congress objective of immediate independence and the opening out of avenues leading to the rapid advance of the masses economically and socially, so that their material standards may be raised and poverty, malnutrition, famine and lack of the necessaries in life may be ended, and all the people of the country may have freedom and the opportunity to grow and develop according to their genius.

These proposals fall short of these objectives. Yet the Committee have considered them earnestly in all their aspects because of their desire to find some way for the peaceful settlement of India's problem and the ending of the conflict between India and England.

The kind of independence which Congress has aimed at is the establishment of a united democratic Indian federation with a central authority which would command respect from the nations of the world, maximum provincial autonomy, and equal rights for all men and women in the country. The limitation of the central authority, as contained in the proposals as well as the system of grouping of provinces, weakened the whole structure and was unfair to some provinces, such as the North West Frontier Province, and Assam, and to some of the minorities, notably the Sikhs.

The Committee disapproved of this. They felt, however, taking the proposals as a whole, that there was sufficient scope for enlarging and strengthening the central authority and for fully ensuring the right of a province to act according to its choice in regard to grouping, and to give protection to such minorities as might otherwise be placed at a disadvantage. Certain other objections were also raised on their behalf, notably the possibility of non-nationals taking any part in the constitution-making. It is clear that it would be a breach both of the letter and the spirit of the statement of May 16 if any non-Indian participated in voting or standing for election to the constituent assembly.

In the proposals for an interim government contained in the statement of June 16, the defects related to matters of vital concern to the Congress. Some of these have been pointed out in a letter of June 25, from the Congress President to the Viceroy. The provisional government must have power and authority and responsibility and should function,

in fact if not in law, as a *de facto* independent government leading to the full independence to come. The members of such a government can only hold themselves responsible to the people and not to any external authority. In the formation of a provisional or other government, Congress can never give up the national character of Congress or accept an artificial and unjust parity, or agree to a veto of a communal group. The Committee are unable to accept the proposals for the formation of an interim government as contained in the statement of June 16.

The Committee have, however, decided that the Congress should join the proposed constituent assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.

While the Committee have agreed to Congress participation in the constituent assembly, it is, in their opinion, essential that a representative and responsible provisional national government be formed at the earliest possible date. The continuation of an authoritarian and unrepresentative government can only add to the suffering of the famishing masses and increase discontent. It will also put in jeopardy the work of the constituent assembly, which can only function in a free environment.

The Working Committee recommend accordingly to the All India Congress Committee, and for the purpose of considering and ratifying this recommendation they convene an emergency meeting of the All India Congress Committee in Bombay on July 6 and 7.<sup>3</sup>

3. Treating the Congress decision as acceptance, the Cabinet Mission in a statement on 26 June 1946 expressed its happiness that "constitution-making can now proceed with the consent of the two major parties." The failure to form an interim government was regrettable but, after a short interval, renewed efforts would be made by the Viceroy to bring such a government into being. The Mission itself would leave India on 29 June 1946.

## **9. Interview of the Cabinet Mission and Wavell with Congress Leaders<sup>1</sup>**

The Congress were represented by Maulana Azad, Pandit Nehru, Dr. Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

1. Delhi, 26 June 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VII, pp. 1050-1052. Extracts.



The Secretary of State said the delegation has received Maulana Azad's letter of the 25th June and had noted what was said in it in the earlier paragraphs as to the reasons why Congress could not accept the statement of the 16th June. They were glad to observe however that the last paragraph of the letter contained an acceptance by Congress of the statement of May 16th. They had noted that in this paragraph the Congress President said that the Congress Working Committee adhered to the views and the interpretation of the statement which they had put forward in their resolution of the 24th May and in correspondence and conversation with the delegation.

The delegation wanted to make it perfectly clear that they did not depart from their view that their interpretation as set out in their statement of the 25th May was the correct one and that any departure from it by resolution required the agreement of both parties. They asked the Congress representatives to note that this was the delegation's position.

Pandit Nehru asked to what particular part of the statement of the 16th May the Secretary of State was referring. The Secretary of State said that he was referring in particular to the provisions about the constituent assembly dividing up into Sections.

Maulana Azad said that the Congress had considered the statement of the 25th May. They considered that they could function in the constituent assembly in a particular way. Obviously the Congress were opposed to the grouping proposal. They thought it would weaken India and they would try to induce the constituent assembly to decide against it by reason and argument and by every means at their disposal. Obviously anyone going into the constituent assembly goes there to achieve results and not to break it up. Whatever the interpretation of the statement, it would have to reconcile itself with the facts of the situation. Mr. Alexander said that naturally the constituent assembly could not prevent the provinces opting out of a group after the constitution had been formed and a decision on this point could be reached by the people themselves after the election on the new register...

The Secretary of State said that the statement of June 16th had contained definite proposals for an interim government. It was a great regret to the delegation that the Congress had turned these proposals down. The alternatives now were to go straight on to a new attempt to form an interim government of both parties or to have a short interval before conversations for that purpose were resumed. They suggested strongly that a short interval was desirable. The delegation must go home to report to His Majesty's Government after an absence of three months.

The Viceroy said that it was still his aim to get a coalition of the two main parties as he was convinced that this was the best solution....

Maulana Azad said it was obviously for the Viceroy to decide what to do at the present moment. From the point of view of Congress it was unfortunate that the interim government should not be formed at once. They wanted a new government as much or more than the Viceroy did....

The Congress representatives said that they might have to place some correspondence, notably their last letter, before their All India Committee. They would like to know the intention with regard to publication of the correspondence. The delegation said that they would have to consider this and the Congress representatives said that they would go through the correspondence and refer to the Viceroy about any letters which they wished to publish.

Pandit Nehru said that many of the Congress provincial governments were troubled with friction with Governors on petty matters. The Governors had certain powers under the existing law which were obsolete. The position of Congress was that these matters should be dealt with on the advice of ministers. The Viceroy said that Governors had done all they could to establish good relations with their ministries. They had however certain statutory responsibilities in matters such as the services and the minorities. One matter over which there had been disagreement had been nominations of minority representatives to legislatures. Sardar Patel said that in Madras the nominations had all gone to anti-Congress people and Dr. Prasad said that in Bihar the Governor had nominated one scheduled caste recommended by Congress but had also nominated an Ambedkarite, though the Ambedkarites had been defeated even in the primary elections. The Viceroy said that he had in fact instructed Governors not to press certain matters in which they had power to disregard ministerial advice but that he could not agree that all the powers of Governors should be exercised on the advice of ministers....

Pandit Nehru said that there was one small matter which they wished to mention. The payments proposed for members of the constituent assembly were far too high and upset all the standards which Congress regarded as appropriate for official payments. They understood that an allowance of Rs. 75 a day had been fixed by the Sind Government. The Viceroy said that he was not aware of this and would look into it. He agreed that Rs. 75 appeared much too high. Pandit Nehru said that their accommodation in Delhi should be provided free and the allowance fixed on that foundation.

## 10. To Rana Brahma Shamsheer Jung<sup>1</sup>

1 July 1946

My dear Rana Sahab,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter of the 14th May was handed to me today by Mr. S.P. Upadhyaya. Thank you for it. He also showed me photographs you took in Bombay some years ago and I remembered with pleasure our meeting then.

As you know, we are still in the middle of negotiations with the British Government. I cannot yet say what the outcome of all this will be, but I am sure that ultimately it will result in the full independence of India. An independent India inevitably must have the closest contact with Nepal. I think often of Nepal with its great resources and its splendid human material. I hope that steps will be taken soon to bring up Nepal in line with progressive nations. When an opportunity offers itself I would very much like to meet you and other friends in Nepal to discuss matters of common concern. The next few years are going to be difficult ones for us, but that is the case for the whole world. We need not be afraid of these difficulties and I am convinced that we shall survive them and that India will go ahead at a rapid pace. In this process, Nepal, of course, has a prominent part to play.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. General in the Nepal Army; later member of the Upper House of the Nepal Parliament; author of *Nepal Ka Mahabhukamp* and *Bhanubhakta Acharya* (in Nepali).

## 11. Full Powers for Interim Government<sup>1</sup>

After three years of storm and stress and rebellion, the A.I.C.C. met last year and it repeated the brave challenge of August 9, 1942. And now

1. Jawaharlal's editorial in the *National Herald*, printed on 3 July 1946.

after many months of a quieter though nonetheless eventful existence, it is meeting again in the city of Bombay. What will be its message to the country, what call will it give to the expectant multitudes? It is generally admitted that it will ratify the decisions recently taken by the Working Committee in Delhi. That we think is right and inevitable, and yet much depends on the manner of doing it.

Some voices<sup>2</sup> have been raised in criticism of these decisions, or rather one of them, and it has been objected also that the A.I.C.C. has been presented with a *fait accompli*. We appreciate the feeling behind these criticisms, and it is good that there are sentinels in the ranks of the Congress who challenge the pilgrims when they appear to deviate from the straight path. But these criticisms seem to us to be based on an inherent sense of weakness rather than of revolutionary strength and to ignore the realities of today and the position that the Congress has attained. We have not passed the stage of revolutionary agitation and activity, for that can only take place when the revolution has achieved its purpose, and yet we have reached a stage when the Congress must of necessity deal across the conference table with its opponents and those outside its fold. While we must continue to be revolutionaries, we have to be statesmen also. It is a difficult combination. The revolutionary, without the leaven of statesmanship, may become a negative shouter of slogans with no contact with the reality of the changing world; the politician, without idealism and revolutionary ardour, is likely to sink to sheer opportunism and unworthy compromises.

How is the Congress to deal with others who are opposed to it and yet who seek to approach it with the professed desire of finding a solution of their conflicts? How does the government of one country deal with another government? Not by mass meetings, but by the meeting of accredited representatives of either party who must shoulder the responsibility and the risk of representing their cause to the best of their ability. They cannot refer every point raised in the course of negotiations to their people or even to their parliament. No negotiations can be carried on in this way. It is only the final result that can be and must be referred for ratification or rejection.

2. The left wing of the Congress headed by Jayaprakash Narayan and Ram Manohar Lohia had been insisting on the immediate declaration of independence and the withdrawal of British troops as preliminary to the setting up of a constitution-making body for the establishment of a government. They described the Cabinet Mission plan as one aimed at perpetuating vested British interests through backdoor methods such as the compulsory grouping of provinces and veto powers.

The decision of the Working Committee regarding the so-called short-term plan, that is, the rejection of the proposals for a provisional government, offers no difficulty whatever to Congressmen. There is complete unanimity about it. But with this approach there is also the conviction that there can be no successful tackling of the long-term issues unless there is an atmosphere of freedom which only a *de facto* independent national government can ensure. We trust that no time will be wasted in future over relatively minor issues so long as the major issue of independence in practice is not decided.

What is called the long-term plan raises more difficult questions of interpretation and approach and our decision may well depend on our answers to these questions. If what is intended is merely a constitution-making body, a drafting committee with no power to give final shape to our constitution without outside interference, then clearly we have no place in it. If, on the other hand, we have a real constituent assembly, with sovereign authority, then there is certainly scope for work and advance and even, if necessary, for struggle. The constituent assembly that will presumably meet next month obviously cannot be compared with the revolutionary assemblies of France or the United States. Its origin and formation are dubious and not to our liking, and some attempt has been made to limit its sovereignty.

Yet the Congress approach to it has been made perfectly clear. Without ignoring the difficulties before us, we are determined to treat it as a sovereign body representing the will of the Indian people, which cannot be over-riden by any other authority, external or internal. If we can follow up this approach we can convert a pale constitution-making body into a real organ of power which can bend all those who challenge it to its will. Out of this sovereign authority can emerge not only a real constitution of free and united India, but, if necessary, a provisional government representing the will of the people.

If there is scope and possibility for this, as we believe there are, then we must take full advantage of the occasion, and not allow it to pass untested because we would prefer to function in a more favourable environment. If we are stout of heart and clear of purpose no harm can come to us and much good may result. If it so happens that India's independence cannot come without more conflict and struggle, for that too we shall be better prepared if we follow this path.

This is the major issue before the A.I.C.C. There are others also apparently not connected with it, and yet bearing the most intimate relationship. In South Africa our countrymen are gallantly fighting not

only for the rights of Indians but of all peoples and races under subjection.<sup>3</sup> In South Africa today Asia and Africa face Europe and America, and the issue affects the world.

Kashmir has also become the symbol of larger things—the whole affects the States system of India. It is perhaps fortunate that South Africa and Kashmir are there to remind us of these vital problems and of the reality behind the courteous talks of the British Cabinet Ministers and the Viceroy.

3. The Indian community in South Africa organised passive resistance on 13 June 1946 in protest against the Asiatic Land Tenure and Indian Representation Bill which became law from 3 June 1946. There were about 200,000 Indians in South Africa.

## 12. The Acceptance of the Plan for a Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>

The Congress has agreed to participate in the deliberations of the constituent assembly with its own interpretation of the Cabinet Mission's long-range proposals. We will try to evolve the constitution of a sovereign India in the light of our own interpretation.

The Congress is not going to the constituent assembly to bid good-bye to its long-cherished principles. Our immediate objective is complete independence for our country and we examine everything and reach decisions with this perspective. We examined the Cabinet Mission's proposals also in the context of Indian independence and we discovered that they contained some refreshing and good aspects and some reactionary and bad ones. Therefore we chose the best part of it and rejected the worthless ones. We rejected the interim proposals because the Congress after weeks of deliberation came to the conclusion that the acceptance of the interim arrangement as proposed by the Cabinet Mission would give a fatal blow to some of our cherished principles and to the very foundations on which the edifice of the powerful national organisation, that represents the urges and aspirations of the vast multitude, irrespective of caste and religion, has been raised.

Now the position is that according to the latest statement of the Cabinet Mission, fresh attempts will be made within a few weeks to

1. Speech at Jhansi, 4 July 1946. From the *National Herald*, 5 July 1946.

instal a truly national government at the centre. But I can assure you that, whatever be the new proposals, our standard of judging them will be the same, and we will not touch anything, even with the tips of our fingers, if it is incompatible with the dignity of our organisation and its principles.

The long-range arrangement of the mission's plan also contained some defects, in some respects very vital ones, yet we accepted it because one good element in that scheme is that the representatives of the people have been given full powers and complete freedom to make and mould the destiny of our country. But there, too, we are not bound by the interpretations which the mission or other reactionary elements give to the plan. We will be guided in the constituent assembly by our own interpretation, and will try to evolve a constitution according to our standards of judging things. We examine everything in the context of Indian independence.

To be frank I am not at all sorry about my visit to Kashmir and the upheaval that it created. As a matter of fact it helped to some extent to focus the attention of the entire country on the autocratic ways and vagaries of the princes and the repression, suppression and oppression to which the state's people are subjected in the hands of the miniature dictators who enjoy unlimited authority and power.

Imperialism, fascism and militarism are crumbling and disappearing from the world scene, while the autocracy of the medieval age is still going on in full blast in the Indian States. But this autocracy and the law of the jungle must end and I am sure it will end once the power passes to the representatives of the people. The mainstay of the autocracy of the Indian princes is the British power and with the British off the scene, the edifice of the autocratic princely structure will also crumble and the princes will have to come to some arrangement with revolutionary and progressive forces.

To me India is one and undivided. Whether it be a British Indian province or an Indian State, every bit of this vast country is my home, where I will assert my elementary civic rights. It is inconceivable for me to think that in one part of this country I can enjoy all freedom while in another I cannot. These elementary civic rights must be found everywhere in the country and no artificial or man-made rules can be allowed to strangle them. This was not there and hence the conflict in Kashmir over my presence. Due to the urgent work in Delhi I had to leave Kashmir. I want to return to Kashmir after the Cabinet Mission negotiations, but still more urgent problems demand my presence in Bombay. But Kashmir is always in my mind, and as soon as I am free, it will engage my full attention.

### 13. Continued Commitment to the Quit India Resolution<sup>1</sup>

The Congress continues to adhere to the policy of the Quit India resolution of August 1942, and whatever decisions it takes will be based on this policy. It will follow the same path until the object for which we have been fighting all these years has been achieved. When we take any decision, we will always think of all problems in the context of the Quit India resolution and the fundamental demand of the people of India, namely, complete independence.

As regards the long-term plan the question is not one of accepting an offer made by the British Government or rejecting it, but of bringing the goal of our freedom nearer by accepting the responsibility to shape our own future. We are on the threshold of freedom, and therefore, our responsibility is great. We have to build up a strong and united India, which will take its rightful place in the orbit of nations of the world.

1. Speech at Bombay, 7 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 8 July 1946.

### 14. The Rationale of Congress Policy<sup>1</sup>

We have been talking of independence for a long time. Different interpretations are given of what that independence means. The Viceroy and the Muslim League also speak of the independence of India. But the Congress idea of independence is certainly different from what the Muslim League or the Viceroy thinks. Our idea of independence is that there must be absolutely no foreign domination in India, and that India may even break its connections with the British. We want to establish a republic of India.

1. By 204 votes against 51, the All India Congress Committee ratified the Congress Working Committee's resolution passed in Delhi on 26 June 1946, accepting the British Government's proposal to summon a constituent assembly to frame a constitution for a free and independent India and rejecting the interim government proposal. This account of Jawaharlal's concluding remarks in the debate at Bombay on 7 July 1946 is based on the report in *The Hindu*, 8 July 1946.



Mr. Achyut Patwardhan expressed surprise how foreign affairs could be carried on without foreign trade. The surprise was perfectly legitimate. Why should foreign affairs be carried on without foreign trade, surprises me. It is astonishing, as the Maulana stated, how inferences are drawn and conclusions are reached on that basis.

There is no doubt that in so far as the resolution, which we have discussed yesterday and today, is concerned, a great deal can be said in favour or against. A great deal can be said about the difficulties and complications in which we may get caught. The whole question is ultimately of balancing and coming to a conclusion without loss. It is obvious, so far as I am concerned, that foreign affairs includes foreign trade. It is quite absurd to talk of foreign affairs without foreign trade, foreign economic policy and foreign exchange.

When India is free, India will do just what it likes. It is quite absurd and foolish to lay down now what it is going to do a few years hence.

I do think that some time or other in the future, we may have to summon our own proper revolutionary constituent assembly. That does not mean we should not take advantage of the present offer and work it out for our own advantage. If we do not succeed in the constituent assembly, we can change our tactics in any manner to suit whatever form we desire.

There is a good deal of talk of the Cabinet Mission's long-term plan and short-term plan. So far as I can see, it is not a question of our accepting any plan—long or short. It is only a question of our agreeing to go into the constituent assembly. That is all, and there is nothing more than that. We will remain in the assembly so long as we think it is good for India, and we will come out when we think it is endangering our cause, and then offer our battle. We are not bound by a single thing except that we have decided for the moment to go to the constituent assembly, not certainly to deliver fine speeches, but to build something, to overcome some of our problems.

As regards defence and communications, obviously they include all manner of things connected with defence. Defence must include a large number of industries. Apart from foreign affairs, defence and communications, the union centre will have power to raise funds. This means the union centre will control certain revenue-producing subjects. I cannot say offhand what these revenue-producing subjects will be. It is inevitable that a decision will have to be made as to what revenue-producing subjects should go to the Centre. Presumably, the obvious subjects are customs, including tariffs, and may be, income-tax also.

Arguments have been advanced on the one side that there could exist a very satisfactory constituent assembly—something we have been

asking for and now we have got it. On the other hand, it has been stated that such a constituent assembly is futile and is being imposed on us, to which we should not attach much importance. If I am asked to give my own view, I would say that it is not, obviously, something which we have desired and worked for. There are many difficulties and snags and the scales are weighted against us. On the other hand, it is obvious also that it is not so bad. What will be the outcome of this assembly? It may be that it does not function for long, it breaks up. It may be we may get something out of it, and we go ahead, and it solves some of our problems. And we produce some kind of a constitution which is desirable and workable.

All these things are possible. But it seems to me rather fantastic for the Cabinet Mission to tell us that, after ten years, we are going to do this or that. It is fantastic and I cannot imagine anybody laying down any rule for India ten years hence. When India is free, India will do just what it likes.

As the discussions in the House are about the proposed constituent assembly, I am reminded of other constituent assemblies. Perhaps the comparison is not justified. About 157 years ago a constituent assembly called the "States General" was convened in France. It was convened by the King of France himself. He was an autocratic and foolish King, and he soon got into trouble with that assembly and ultimately, within a few years, the head of that King was cut off. India, of course, would not cut off other people's heads. Again, there was the case of the American colonies. Do you remember that even after the declaration of war against England, there were colonies which continued to send humble petitions of loyalty to the English King? It is only after a hard war that things changed.

Now in regard to criticisms<sup>2</sup> against the resolution, it is strange that one should be afraid of a thing because at the beginning it is not exactly to one's liking. It seems to me that we have begun to attach far too much importance to gestures, words and slogans and generally to a certain heroic attitude. It is a dangerous thing. Remember, we are a great nation. We are no longer a tiny people begging for freedom at the hands of the British. We are on the verge of freedom.

Of course, we have to fight those who come in our way. But we should not forget the fact that while we have to be revolutionary, we also have to think in terms of statesmanship, not in terms of careerists

2. Jayaprakash Narayan, Achyut Patwardhan and Ram Manohar Lohia urged upon the Congress not to have anything to do with the Muslim League and to develop the revolutionary urge for a final overthrow of the British power in India.

merely shouting slogans and escaping responsibility, but in terms of facing big problems. I beg of you to look upon all these problems in a spirit of revolutionary statesmanship and not in a spirit of submission to opportunism, which is so rampant all over India today.

There is always a tendency, if we enter these legislatures, for us to get entangled in minor problems and forget big things. Although there is that danger, yet it is quite impossible after we have arrived at a certain stage to say that you cannot escape responsibility for solving your own problems. The world looks to you and to the Congress for great decisions and it is no use sitting, cursing, fuming and fretting.

I am glad that two women members participated in the debate, one of whom made a fiery speech.<sup>3</sup> This is indicative of the temper of Indian womanhood. I urge that more and more opportunities should be given to Indian women to participate in our public life.

It is customary to announce the names of the members of the new Working Committee as soon as a new President assumes office. I did not have enough time to think over it. It may be necessary to consult and take advice in this connection. The Committee must, of course, consist of old and experienced men. At the same time, new blood must also be infused. In the past, conditions had been such that the question of new blood had been postponed. I hope I will be able to announce the names of the members of the new Working Committee in two or three days before I leave Bombay.

3. "We have listened to you and obeyed you all these years," said Aruna Asaf Ali, addressing Mahatma Gandhi at this debate. "You must now listen to us and it is your duty to obey us."

## 15. A. K. Azad's Letter to Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Bombay  
9 July 1946

My dear Lord Wavell,

I received your private and personal letter<sup>2</sup> just on the eve of the A.I.C.C. As you have no doubt seen from the papers, the A.I.C.C.

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, p. 24.
2. On 3 July 1946, Wavell wrote to Maulana Azad: "I am anxious that the forthcoming meeting of the A.I.C.C. should not result in that body giving to the President a mandate such as would make fresh negotiations for a coalition government almost impossible."

have ratified the resolution<sup>3</sup> of the Working Committee of the 25th June. This has been unconditional and unqualified, so that the Working Committee will not in any way be hampered in negotiating with you for the interim government.

I agree with you that in the existing circumstances of the country, our best interests can be served by a coalition government composed of both the Congress and the League. You know the stand I have taken on this question. You perhaps also know that I brought round the Working Committee to my point of view in spite of sharp differences and opposition by a majority of my colleagues. I may also tell you that there has been a strong attempt to bind down the Working Committee by a resolution of the A.I.C.C., but I did not permit any restriction on the discretion of the Working Committee.

I must at the same time tell you that the Congress will maintain its national character in all circumstances. You know the complications that arose both in Simla in June 1945 and in Delhi in June 1946, and I strongly hope that you will from the very outset adopt a course which will prevent the repetition of such complications and deadlock.

Yours sincerely,  
A. K. Azad

3. See *ante*, item 8.

## 16. Warning against Complacency<sup>1</sup>

The Congress decision to enter the constituent assembly does not mean the dawn of a new era of freedom and sovereignty for India. So I warn the people not to labour under the delusion that the Congress participation in the proposed constituent assembly means the end of their national struggle to wrest freedom for India. The Congress has decided to give a fair trial to the proposal of a constituent assembly. The Congress will send its representatives to the constituent assembly with a definite purpose to frame a constitution of a free and independent India

1. Speech at Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.

based on democracy and complete sovereignty of the people. But it does not mean that the formation of a constituent assembly will immediately lead to freedom.

The Congress President has asked us to be ready to face bullets and bayonets if we have to launch a fight to wrest freedom from the British. I do not want that the people should get a feeling of complacency and lethargy as the result of a false confidence that we have already won freedom. I stress the need for unity and strength among us so that we may prepare ourselves for a struggle if that is the only alternative in case the proposed constituent assembly fails to bring us freedom.

But, at the same time, we will also have to prepare ourselves to take over the administration of the country in our own hands to run the government. We have, therefore, to be prepared for both the situations—for a struggle to wrest freedom, and for the responsibility of running the government of a free and independent India.

I see the threat of a global war and a world conflict between the white population and the black, as the result of the inhuman and uncivilized racial discrimination. I declare that a free and independent India will not tolerate racial discrimination, but, on the contrary, will allow the whites to settle down in India provided they consider themselves as Indians first and last.

## 17. The Nature of the Congress Commitment<sup>1</sup>

**Question:** Can you amplify your statement<sup>2</sup> in the All India Congress Committee that the Congress had made no commitment in regard either to the long-term or to the short-term plan of the Cabinet Mission except to go into the constituent assembly?

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** As a matter of fact, if you read the correspondence that has passed between the Congress President and the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, you will see in what conditions and circumstances we agreed to go into this constituent assembly. The first thing

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.

2. See *ante*, item 14.

is we have agreed to nothing else. It is true that in going into the constituent assembly we have inevitably to agree to a certain procedure in advance, that is, the election of the candidates to the constituent assembly. What we do there, we are entirely and absolutely free to determine. We have not committed ourselves on any single matter to anybody. Naturally, even though one might not agree to commit oneself, there is a certain compulsion of facts which makes one accept this thing or that thing. I do not know what that might be in this particular context. But the nature of compulsion of the facts would be not of the British Government's desires or intents, but how to make the assembly a success, and how to avoid its breaking up. That will certainly be a very important consideration. But the British Government does not appear there at all.

When the Congress stated that the constituent assembly was to be a sovereign body, the Cabinet Mission's reply was more or less 'yes', subject to two considerations: first, a proper arrangement for the minorities, and secondly, a treaty between India and England. I wish the Mission had stated that both these matters were not controversial. It is obvious that the minorities question has to be settled satisfactorily. It is also obvious that if there is any kind of peaceful changeover in India, it is bound to result in some kind of a treaty with Britain.

What exactly that treaty will be I cannot say. But if the British Government presume to tell us that they are going to hold anything in India, because they do not agree either in regard to the minorities or in regard to the treaty, we shall not accept that position. It will become a *casus belli*.

We shall have no treaty if they seek to impose anything on us, and we shall tear up any treaty they try to impose. If they treat us as equals and come to terms, there will be a treaty. But if there is the slightest attempt at imposition, we shall have no treaty.

In regard to the minorities, it is our problem, and we shall, no doubt, succeed in solving it. We accept no outsiders' interference in it—certainly not the British Government's—and, therefore, these two limiting factors to the sovereignty of the constituent assembly are not accepted by us.

The only limitation on the party's action would be its anxiety to carry the work of the constituent assembly to a successful conclusion. It does not make the slightest difference what the Cabinet Mission thinks or does in the matter.

The big probability is that, from any approach to the grouping question, there will be no grouping. Obviously, Section A will decide against grouping. Speaking in betting language, there is a four-to-one chance

of the North West Frontier Province deciding against grouping. Then Group B collapses. It is highly likely that Assam will decide against grouping with Bengal, although I would not like to say what the initial decision may be, since it is evenly balanced. But I can say, with every assurance and conviction, that there is going to be, finally, no grouping there, because Assam will not tolerate it under any circumstances whatever. Thus you see this grouping business, approached from any point of view, does not get on at all.

Q: How would the provincial jealousies work against grouping?

JN: First, but for the Muslim League, the entire country is opposed to the grouping of provinces. The Muslim League thus stands by itself isolated on this question.

Applying this principle, one will find in the north-west zone that there is a kind of balance, anti-grouping more or less even with pro-grouping.

Secondly, entirely for other reasons—non-political, non-Congress, non-League—there is a good deal of feeling against grouping with the Punjab, both in the North West Frontier Province and Sind, for economic and other reasons. That is to say, even the Muslims in Sind dislike the idea of grouping with the Punjab, for fear of domination by the Punjab which is the dominant party in that group, and more aggressive and advanced in some ways.

Apart from the imposed discipline from the Muslim League, both in the Frontier and in Sind, the people are unanimously against grouping, because both these provinces are afraid of being swamped by the Punjab.

Q: When will the provisional national government be formed at the Centre?

JN: I cannot just peep into the future and say what is going to happen. For the moment, we are somewhat engaged in the constituent assembly elections.

But remember this, that the constituent assembly is not going to put up easily for long with the kind of caretaker government that is in office today. There is bound to be conflict. In fact, the caretaker government has no stability, nor is there any possibility of its long continuance. How and when and what shape the new government will take, I cannot say. It will be just entering into a speculation.

Q: What do you expect from the forthcoming meeting of the All-India Muslim League Council at Bombay?

JN: Whatever the Congress does, it is always intended to create new situations. We do not follow other people's situations. I am glad that the Muslim League has realised that we have created a new situation. We propose to create many further new situations. We are sometimes asked what we would do if the League decides to do this or that. We shall see what the conditions then are and decide accordingly.

Q: What would be the powers of the proposed Union Centre?

JN: According to the Cabinet Mission's proposals, there are three or four basic subjects in the Union Centre—defence, foreign affairs, communications and the power to raise finances for these. Obviously, defence and communications have a large number of industries behind them. So these industries inevitably come under the Union Government, and they are likely to grow. Defence is such a wide subject that it tends to expand its scope and activities more and more. All that comes under the union government.

Similarly, external affairs, inevitably, include foreign trade policy. You cannot have a foreign policy if you divorce foreign trade from it. Foreign affairs include all manner of things which are not put down there, but which can be brought in.

Q: How can finances for the union be raised?

JN: It has to be done by taxation. If anyone suggests that some kind of contributions or doles are going to be given by the provinces or states, it is bunkum. No central government can be run on doles.

An attempt to carry on the administration with contributions ended in a failure in the United States in the early days of the American confederation. Inevitably, therefore, any central government must raise its finance by taxation.<sup>3</sup> I cannot make a list now, but obviously customs, including tariffs, is bound to be one source of taxation. In fact, tariffs are connected with foreign trade policy. It may be that income tax is another. I do not know what else.

The central government must be responsible for foreign market loans and such other subjects. It also must obviously control currency and credit. Who is going to do it, if not the Centre? You cannot allow

3. A controversy arose over the financial powers of the Union Centre, the Congress wishing it to have powers of direct taxation and to be self-supporting, while Jinnah advocated that it should be given a lump sum and should have to seek contributions from the groups if it wanted more.



each unit or province to carry on a separate type of credit and foreign policy.

Suppose there is trouble between the provinces or States, or an economic breakdown due to famine conditions. Inevitably the Centre comes in again. However limited the Centre might be, you cannot help the Centre having wide powers, because the past few years have seen that the absence of central authority had created conditions far worse in the country. However, the fact that there has been a central authority has not done much good to the country, because the authority is incompetent.

It is obvious that without a central authority, you cannot deal with the problems I have mentioned. There must be some overall power to intervene in a grave crisis, such as a breakdown of the administration, or an economic breakdown or a famine.

The scope of the Centre, even though limited, inevitably grows, because it cannot exist otherwise. Though some people might oppose this broadening of the scope of the Centre, the constituent assembly will have to decide on the point.

**Q:** Should not the Congress launch direct action against the Portuguese administration in Goa?<sup>4</sup>

**JN:** I do not think it will be necessary to start any kind of direct action there, because the Portuguese administration will disappear automatically when the British power departs from India.

I welcome the recent statement<sup>5</sup> of the French Governor of Pondicherry that it would be open to the people of Pondicherry to join the proposed Indian union. In fact, the Governor stated that if the people of Pondicherry joined the Indian union, he himself would become an Indian citizen.

The existence of foreign administrations other than the British in India is only a small trouble for the moment. You cannot expect the Congress to lead agitations against little pimples. It is for the local

4. The Portuguese authorities had taken suppressive measures against the people in Goa struggling for civil liberties. Ram Manohar Lohia was expelled from Goa for five years. The founder and the secretary of the Goa Congress were arrested and court-martialled although no martial law was in force in Goa. Public meetings were banned and those who took part in them, in spite of the ban, were beaten up.

5. On 3 June 1946, the Governor of French India said at Pondicherry that the question whether French India was to join the Indian union as sponsored in the British Cabinet declaration had been left to the will of the people of French India.

people to do what they like, and the Congress will deal with the question, normally speaking, when the British power has vanished—as it is vanishing—through diplomatic and other channels and, no doubt, settle it.

Q: What is going to be your next move in Kashmir affairs?

JN: It is my intention to go to Kashmir, but I have not fixed any date, partly because I have some other important work to do, and partly, also, because I have been watching certain developments there. The Kashmir State affair has been formally taken over by the Congress Working Committee as was revealed by the telegram<sup>6</sup> which Maulana Azad sent me asking me to return from there. Therefore any action I should now take has to be in consultation with the Working Committee.

It has ceased to be, if it ever was, just a personal adventure. Although I may like adventures, the matter has to be treated on a more serious level. It has really become one of the first-class issues in India. It affects the future of the Indian States. It also affects the position of the Political Department of the Government of India that has been dragged into the picture. The parties concerned are not merely Jawaharlal Nehru on one side, and the Kashmir State on the other, but the Indian National Congress and the States People's Conference on one side, and the Political Department of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government on the other.

Whatever happens now is likely to affect other matters, including the whole question of the Indian States in the constituent assembly. Because it has such far-reaching consequences, we have tried, as far as we can, to restrain our ardour, and to go ahead only after full thought. Normally speaking, I might go to Kashmir in time for the case against Sheikh Abdullah, whose arrest was the immediate cause of the trouble.

The Kashmir Prime Minister has, during his recent visit to Bombay, met not only Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel, but also Mahatma Gandhi. He has gone back to Kashmir to consult the Maharaja and, may be, the Political Department.

6. Maulana Azad's telegram of 21 June 1946 read: "I and all are of opinion that your presence here essential above everything else. Remember you are under an organisation which you have adorned so long. Its needs must be paramount for you and me. Remember also that your honour is ours and your obedience to Congress call automatically transfers to it duty of guarding your honour. Committee also solicitous equally with you about Sheikh Abdullah's case and welfare of Kashmir people. Therefore I expect you to return in answer to this. You will tell Maharaja Sahib that as soon as you are freed by Congress you will return to Kashmir to retrieve your honour and fulfil your mission." See *post*, section 6, sub-section "Kashmir State."

**Q:** Do you believe that the recent agitation in Kashmir was inspired by Russia?

**JN:** It is not a question of belief. It is fantastic nonsense. The frontier is full of bazaar rumours. There one meets men of various nationalities, from Tibet, from China and from Central Asia. One enters a new atmosphere. I have no doubt at all that in such places there are, possibly, a number of spies of various foreign powers. There might also be British spies on the other side of the Indian border.

It is quite absurd for any intelligent person to talk of any Russian bogey in Kashmir, or the possibility of a Russian advent into Kashmir, now or in the near future. It might happen fifteen or twenty years hence.

**Q:** What is the Congress stand in respect of the participation of the Indian States in the constituent assembly?

**JN:** Our position has been, and is, that elected representatives of the States' people must go there. The rulers say that they should nominate the representatives. What their stand today is I do not know, but obviously we cannot accept that position. The real difficulty is that, apart from the rulers' position, the governments in the Indian States are so unrepresentative that a proper procedure must be adopted to make them representative and representatives of such governments only should go to the constituent assembly.

**Q:** What is your comment on the bigger States, like Hyderabad, which have not demobilised their wartime armies?

**JN:** It is highly undesirable for all these small separate armies to continue. They are not bound to continue under the Union Government of India. There will be only one central army. May be, during the intervening period of transition, some of these may carry on.

7. The method of selecting the 93 representatives of the States for the constituent assembly was left to consultation between the assembly and the States' rulers. On 17 May 1946, the Nawab of Bhopal wrote to Wavell that the representatives of the States to the constituent assembly should be nominated by the State Governments and entered a *caveat* against the clause in the Cabinet Mission plan that "the method of selection will have to be determined by consultation." Meanwhile, the States People's Conference reiterated its determination not to recognise any decision which did not ensure representation of the States people by means of election.

The history of Hyderabad's army or the military history of Hyderabad is not such as to inspire anybody. Even if I ever think in terms of a conflict, the Hyderabad State forces will not cause me the least trouble or loss of sleep.

Fundamentally, the problem is that the British power is supporting these States. Once that is removed, the picture will change completely. No local State army can carry on independently against the rest of India because it is a physical impossibility.

## 18. Preparation for the Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee have appointed a sub-committee for the purpose of preparing material and draft proposals for the constituent assembly. This committee consists of: M. Asaf Ali, K.M. Munshi, Gopalaswami Ayyangar<sup>2</sup>, K. T. Shah, K. Santanam, Humayun Kabir<sup>3</sup>, D. R. Gadgil<sup>4</sup> and Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman).

Exactly how this committee should function and what it should do can only be satisfactorily decided when it meets. As the time at our disposal is limited, it is desirable to have an early meeting. I hope to fix the meeting soon and inform members by telegram. Probably it will be within ten days and the most suitable venue appears to be New Delhi.

Meanwhile, I hope members will give thought to the matter and prepare their own notes on the various subjects we have to consider. We shall have to suggest first of all the rules of business and proce-

1. Note by Jawaharlal sent to the members of the sub-committee preparing material for the formation of the constituent assembly, Bombay, 10 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. CL-6/1946, p. 723, N.M.M.L.
2. N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar (1882-1953); member, Legislative Assembly, 1927; Chief Minister of Kashmir, 1937-43; Union Minister without Portfolio, 1947-48, for Railways and Transport, 1950-52, and Defence, 1952-53.
3. (1906-1969); Educational Adviser, Government of India, 1948-56; Education Minister, 1957-63; founder-member, Bangla Congress; author of over 20 books.
4. (1901-1971); Director, Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune, 1930-66; Vice-Chancellor, Pune University, 1966-67; Deputy Chairman, Indian Planning Commission, 1967-71.

ture which we would like the constituent assembly to adopt. Then presumably some general directives in the form of resolutions which the assembly can lay down at the outset. These directives, which will be of a political nature and not directly connected with any communal issue, will necessarily be given by the whole assembly. Thus the constitution will be of a republican state with sovereignty residing in the people. The fact that the federal union government has to raise revenues for the subjects under its control necessitates an indication at the outset of what revenue-raising subjects are to be within its scope, such as customs and tariffs, income tax and allied subjects. Currency and national credit cannot be divorced from the Centre. Also, inevitably, the Centre must have some powers to intervene in case of gross maladministration and breakdown of the administrative machinery as well as in cases of public calamities, like famine.

The three central subjects, which have already been indicated, must necessarily include allied and ancillary subjects. Thus external affairs includes foreign trade policy, foreign loans etc. Defence and communications include the industries connected with them.

Fundamental rights and obligations have to be considered thoroughly and exhaustively. They will presumably go much further than the Karachi Congress Resolution<sup>5</sup> on the subject, and might include economic rights etc. This might go a long way to give confidence to minorities and remove their fears and suspicions, though of course such rights and obligations will apply to individuals and not to communities.

Then the constitution as a whole has to be drafted. In doing so we might ignore the suggested grouping and deal with the Centre and provinces only.

The question of the States has also to be considered. I hope members will come to the first meeting fully prepared with these and allied subjects.<sup>6</sup>

5. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 4, pp. 511-513.

6. This committee functioned from July 1946 to November 1948. It made suggestions about autonomous areas, the powers of provincial governments and the Centre, matters relating to the States and the amending powers. The committee also drafted a resolution in December 1946 stating that power would be derived from the people and named the social objectives of the constitution. The committee favoured institutions of parliamentary government and recommended tentatively that the constitution be a loose federation.

## 19. To Niranjan Singh Gill<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
July 13, 1946

My dear Niranjan Singh,

...Your telegram reached me last night on arrival here. I must confess that I have been greatly distressed at the developments among the Sikhs.<sup>2</sup> This is not merely a matter of the constituent assembly but of our politics generally. Over a question like the constituent assembly obviously there cannot be more than one policy, not contradictory and conflicting policies. It is a political issue though naturally other questions are involved in it. I cannot understand how anyone, Mr. Sachar or Prof. Mota Singh,<sup>3</sup> could have thought that we approved of the Sikhs adopting a different policy than that of the Congress regarding entry to the constituent assembly. If so, the Muslims in the Congress have every right to adopt their own policy, so also any other group, and political joint action becomes impossible. There is no divergence of opinion between the Congress and the Sikhs in regard to the main approach to the constituent assembly, that is to say, we object to grouping and the way the Centre is to be narrowed down and some other matters. The question is of strategy and tactics as to how to get what we want and, if we are unable to get it, when to leave this show and adopt different methods. No higher strategy can be successful if different sections go their own way. While we are trying to achieve something through the constituent assembly, the Akali Sikhs try to do something entirely different outside.

Another serious question arises. Are Congress Sikhs to follow Congress discipline in vital matters or not? It is an impossible situation for a

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40/1946, pp. 265-67, N.M.M.I.. Extracts.

2. Sikh leaders, besides approaching the Congress Working Committee to redeem their pledge to stand by the Sikhs, met in a conference at Amritsar and demanded withdrawal of the Cabinet Mission scheme, which, it was feared, would lead to the establishment of Pakistan. Several thousands of Sikhs took a pledge on 23 June 1946 to work unitedly against the acceptance of the scheme. They insisted on veto rights being conceded to them in all matters concerning their community in the Punjab Assembly and in the Union Centre. Meanwhile, the Sikh Panthic Board decided to boycott the election to the constituent assembly in spite of the fact that Partap Singh Kairon was appointed a member of the Congress Working Committee.

3. One of the founder members of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee; was a staunch Akali and a left-wing nationalist. Later member, Punjab Assembly.

member of the Congress Working Committee to pursue a different line of action from that of the Congress.

The effect of recent developments has been, as far as I can see, that instead of winning over other elements to the Congress, Congress Sikhs have been compelled by circumstances to go against Congress decisions. Thus the joint front is not in line with the Congress but against it. It is true that we have repeatedly said that in purely Sikh affairs all Sikhs should have freedom of action. That surely does not mean a different political line. It refers to cultural and other matters. A different political line means the isolation of the Sikhs politically which surely is not desirable from any point of view, least of all that of the Sikhs. You will realise that any effective action has to be taken jointly. The constitution of India will not be framed by the Sikhs alone and any division at this stage is most unfortunate. The right thing to do was for people to be elected now and then for all of us together to meet prior to the constituent assembly to formulate our line of action. I would still suggest this. This does not in any way weaken the Sikhs or mean a going back on their fundamental position. It seems to me that some of the Akali Sikhs are taking a very narrow view and are more concerned with opposing the Congress than with the ultimate interest of the Sikhs.

As circumstances have taken shape, it is exceedingly difficult for me from this distance to issue mandates and the like. I can only advise and leave the matter to your decision and the decision of the Congress Sikhs in the Punjab. The question raises such fundamental issues that the Working Committee at its next meeting will have to consider it as a whole. The position of Sardar Partap Singh as a member of the Congress Working Committee is peculiarly delicate.

This letter will not reach you in time for your tomorrow's meeting. Anyway I shall have it sent and, separately, I shall send you a telegram.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 20. Telegram to Partap Singh Kalron<sup>1</sup>

13 July 46

Received Gill's telegram, letter. Am greatly distressed at developments evidently owing to complete misunderstanding among Congress Sikhs

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

about Congress attitude. Their position and especially yours delicate if policy opposed to Congress followed. Right course evidently joint effective action after mutual consultation meanwhile accepting election. In view complicated situation do not wish to issue mandate or impose decision from here and leave you and Congress Sikhs to take final decision keeping larger interests of Sikhs Congress and country in view. Matter will have to be considered by Congress Working Committee later.

Jawaharlal Nehru

## 21. To P. Subbarayan<sup>1</sup>

Lucknow  
July 14, 1946

My dear Subbarayan,

'Two or three days ago I read a brief report of a speech you delivered somewhere in which you said that Rajaji's policy of 1942 had triumphed now. I do not exactly know what you meant by this and of course you have every right to hold and express any opinion. But it struck me that perhaps you had in mind the fact that I had included Rajaji in the Working Committee.

I should like to make it perfectly clear to you that I hold today, as I held in 1942, that Rajaji's policy then was completely wrong, divorced from the great mass of public opinion, and injurious to our cause. In fact that opinion has been greatly strengthened by subsequent events. About Rajaji's ability there can be no doubt, as well as his earnestness. Often enough one wants to have the benefit of his clear analysis and his opinion on a current topic or development. In the peculiar circumstances of today his keen intelligence is likely to be of considerable help. But the big gap between his political outlook and the outlook of most Congressmen continues and it is well to realise this. We function today in continuation of the Congress policy of 1942. Nothing can be clearer than that and it surprises me that one should think otherwise. If the Congress gave up their policy I would not be in the executive. If in the future a conflict arises between this policy and what used to be Rajaji's policy in 1942, it will be difficult for Rajaji and me to be in the same executive.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



I hold rather strong views on the subject and, as you must know, there are large numbers of others who do so also. It is no service to Rajaji or to others to minimise this difference or to say that Rajaji's old viewpoint has triumphed. It has done nothing of the kind and I am sure that should that viewpoint find expression again it will be strenuously combated.

I do not wish to enter into any public controversy on this subject, but I thought it only fair to you to let you know how I feel about this matter. I am sending a copy of this letter to Rajaji.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 22. Intrigues of the Governor of Sind<sup>1</sup>

Panditji believes that the Governor must have acted in consultation with the Viceroy and both are therefore responsible for doings in Sind.<sup>2</sup> He is not prepared to write, much less to speak, to the Viceroy for the recall of the Governor. Panditji's attitude from the beginning has been that all those who have since 1942 acted vindictively or brutally or illegally or despite public opinion must be removed as soon as a Provincial Government is set up. On this he will have no compromise. He is of the opinion that as soon as the constituent assembly is set up, and gets going, the question of setting up the provisional interim government is bound to arise. It is now a matter of only 4 more weeks when important decisions are bound to be made. It will be time then to demand the recall of the Governor. Meanwhile, a brief statement should be prepared about all the acts of omission and commission of the Governor and forwarded to the All India Congress Committee office. It will be used when necessary.

1. N.R. Malkani's report of his interview with Jawaharlal on 16 July 1946 at Allahabad. N.R. Malkani Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Defections among the supporters of the Muslim League Ministry in Sind had been sufficient to overthrow it, but the Governor, Francis Mudie, treating the session of the Assembly as more a meeting of an electoral college for election to the constituent assembly, prorogued the Assembly without allowing the coalition of opposition parties to prove their majority.

As for the holding of a session of the Sind Assembly Panditji is of opinion that this is entirely a matter left to the discretion of the Governor. It is a serious deficiency in the constitution that members have no power of requisition. This will be remedied in the future constitution. But Panditji believes that the Governor is bound to call an early session to transact much official business. The Coalition Party must go to its constituents and expose the thoroughly undemocratic action of the Governor in proroguing the session so abruptly. Public opinion must be aroused and organised so that an early session should become inevitable.

When asked whether prorogation without admission of adjournment and no-confidence motions was justifiable Panditji confessed that he could give no opinion on matters of constitutional law. Sir Tej should be consulted as soon as his health improved. A brief note on the breach of assembly rules should be prepared and submitted to Sir Tej for his opinion.

Panditji is very sore about Mr. Bundeh Ali<sup>3</sup>. He believes all that was done by the Coalition Party was done without consulting the Sardar or the Maulana. Considering that the Coalition Party has a very narrow majority, he believes that if a new ministry is formed that too will have an insecure existence, more so as the Governor and the services will be hostile to it and may tip the balance. Under the present circumstances far more attention must be paid to the consolidation of the Coalition Party so as to be able to withstand any attacks by the League Party. New members must not be secured, much less offered a consideration. Instead they should be warned of the hurdles ahead, the difficulties of administration, the possible harassments by the existing ministry, so that they may join the Coalition Party after deliberate decision. In no case should any hullabaloo be raised about demolishing the League Ministry. If we fail it will be demoralising. If we succeed it will not be a success to talk much of. But if we have a majority and the Coalition Party wins in due course, it should take its victory as the beginning of a serious responsibility.

3. Bundeh Ali Khan, Prime Minister of Sind, 1940-41.

### 23. Appeal to Caesar<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Jinnah has appealed to Caesar.<sup>2</sup> But Caesar prefers to remain silent for the present and is waiting and watching developments in India. It is interesting to observe how Caesar functions in relation to his satrapy of India. The two faces of Caesar, so unlike each other and often glaring at each other fiercely and shouting battle-cries, suddenly coalesce and become one when they look at the Indian scene. Mr. Winston Churchill, that emblem of empire on which the sun never sets and the Labourites and Socialists, talking of democracy and freedom and the end of the era of imperialism, foregather together and, while disagreeing on many things, agree about India. Has Mr. Churchill been converted? Or have the Labourites and Socialists succumbed to the weight of British imperial tradition? Or is all this but a game played by Caesar, with his two faces, smiling or frowning alternately, but functioning more or less in the same groove whatever superficial changes might take place?

Mr. Jinnah has appealed to this double-faced Caesar and declaimed at some length at the enormity perpetrated by the Congress, and more especially by the Congress President, in interpreting in their own way the scheme for the constituent assembly.

Caesar has often smiled at Mr. Jinnah in the past and may show his imperial favour again. But the time for dealing with any problem with smiles and frowns is past, and a more positive attitude has to be taken followed by appropriate action.

Why is Mr. Jinnah perturbed and angry? Had he any doubt at any time about the Congress attitude in regard to this or any other matter? Surely in the forest of letters and talks during the past three or four months this Congress attitude has emerged clearly enough. The Congress stands for a sovereign constituent assembly with no external limitations whatever. The Cabinet Mission points out only two limitations—

1. Editorial written by Jawaharlal, *National Herald*, 16 July 1946.
2. Jinnah said on 13 July 1946: "It is understood that there is going to be a debate in the British Parliament very soon on the report of the Cabinet delegation and it is for the British Parliament and His Majesty's Government to make it clear beyond doubt and remove the impression that the Congress has accepted the long-term scheme which is sought to be conveyed abroad by the timid efforts of the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy, who throughout these negotiations suffered from a fear complex and constant threats of the Congress of resorting to civil disobedience, which is now represented by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru..."

the minority problem and the Indo-British treaty. These two questions have no doubt to be faced by us but they have nothing to do with British intervention. The Indo-British treaty cannot in the nature of things be imposed by one party or another. It has to be negotiated by free and independent nations desirous of maintaining friendly relations with each other. It is the consequence of independence, not the price of it. For if it is the price in any way, it is an imposition, something forced down upon us against our will and interests, something representing Caesar's continuing dominion over India. That would be the negation of independence.

The minority problem is with us certainly and no one can just wish it away. That is the real limitation in the way of our progress, and it might give trouble in the constituent assembly. We shall have to face it and solve it with goodwill and good sense. But we are not going to appeal to Caesar over this or any other matter and we shall not welcome or indeed tolerate Caesar's interference.

What are the basic features of the proposals for the constituent assembly? Provincial autonomy, certain procedures, certain proposals. Even these can all be set aside by agreement and even as they are, they have been interpreted by the Congress in a way to give the fullest latitude to the basic assumption of the proposals, that is, provincial autonomy. What then is the grievance? It is odd that today the Congress stands for provincial autonomy and the League, which laid stress for so long on residual powers for the provinces, stands for compulsion of the provinces.

The constituent assembly is certainly to some extent a creation of the British power. But even more so it is a creation of circumstances which none can ignore. Taking birth out of the womb of these circumstances, it may well grow of itself and function as it chooses. Who is going to put an end to it or dissolve it? Lawyers and constitutionalists may ponder over these problems, but there is something beyond the lawyer's textbook and precedent in these happenings, and vital forces are at play and sometimes in conflict.

When this happens reality lies elsewhere than in Caesar's trappings. So we suggest to Mr. Jinnah not to look at or appeal to Caesar as of old. For the old order changeth yielding place to new and Caesar too passes into the story of things that have happened and ceased to be.

Franklin

May 9. 1946

Dear Lord Patrick-Lawrence,

My respects <sup>and</sup> ~~best~~ I have given the most careful cooperation to the memorandum sent by you yesterday suggesting various points of agreement. ~~Enclosed~~ <sup>is</sup> ~~your letter~~ <sup>briefly</sup> On the 28<sup>th</sup> April I sent a letter in which I explained <sup>the</sup> Congress viewpoint in regard to ~~the women's part~~ certain "fundamental principles" mentioned in your letter of 21<sup>st</sup> April. After the first day of the Conference, on May 6<sup>th</sup>, I wrote to you again to avoid any possible misunderstanding regarding the issues being discussed in the Conference.

I now find ~~that~~ from your memorandum  
that some of your suggestions are entirely opposed  
to our views and to the views repeatedly declared by this  
Congress. We are thus placed in a difficult position.  
It has been and is our desire to <sup>sup</sup> settle every  
account, ~~and~~ for a settlement and a change-over  
in <sup>in case</sup> by consent, ~~but~~ and for this purpose we are  
prepared to go far. But there are obvious limits  
beyond which we cannot go if we are convinced  
that this would be injurious to the people of  
India and to India's progress as a free nation.

75.  
(Karnataka) Karnataka, India, 1975

Confidential

Draft

W. C. 29/5/46

The Working Committee have given careful consideration to the Statement dated May 16, 1946 issued by the Delegation of the British Cabinet and the Viceroy on behalf of the British Government, as well as the correspondence relating thereto that has passed between the Congress President and Gandhiji and the members of the Delegation. They have examined it with every desire to find a way for a peaceful and cooperative transfer of power and the establishment of a free and independent India. Such an India must necessarily have a strong central authority capable of representing the nation with honour and dignity in the councils of the world, and which can help in speedily solving by planned economy the many problems that afflict the country and in raising the standards of the mass of the population.

In considering the Statement, the Working Committee have kept <sup>in view</sup> the full picture <sup>of the position</sup> in so far as this was available to them, for the proposals made for the formation of a Provisional Government and the clarification given by members of the Delegation. <sup>92</sup> It is on the basis of ~~the full picture that they~~ <sup>still</sup> judge this picture is ~~not~~ incomplete and vague, and yet it is only on the basis of the full picture that they can judge and come to a

## 24. The Congress and the Sikhs<sup>1</sup>

There appears to be considerable misunderstanding about the recent Sikh developments in the Punjab in connection with the election of representatives to the constituent assembly.<sup>2</sup> This is understandable as I have myself been puzzled and perplexed. The postal strike and the partial telegraph strike have helped in adding to the obscurity. Long distance telephone conversations, which were only partially heard, have not helped much in keeping me informed of what was happening. Ultimately it became impossible for me to disentangle the separate threads and I told the Congress Sikhs in the Punjab that they must understand the Congress position clearly and keeping this in view act as they thought best. The matter would have to be considered by the Working Committee as soon as it meets.

An error and a misunderstanding right at the beginning, made without any reference to us, led to these complications. Congress Sikhs, of course, have to follow the Congress policy which is obviously also in the interest of the Sikhs as well as the country generally. The question was how to do it most effectively and as I was unable to understand the situation fully from here, I left them to decide. I have every hope that this knot will be disentangled soon in accordance with Congress policy.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 17 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 18 July 1946.
2. The Sikhs had refused to join the interim government proposed in the statement of 16 June 1946 because of opposition to compulsory grouping. They did not at first nominate candidates for election to the constituent assembly, but were persuaded to do so at a later date. Meanwhile, both the Congress Sikhs and the Akalis filed their nominations for the same seats and withdrew them later.

## 25. Telegram to Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
17 July 1946

Your message. It has been difficult for me to follow recent Sikh developments in Punjab. Was informed that at most one Congress Sikh

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-64/1946, N.M.M.L.

could get in now others resigning after election but if all withdrew now extremely probable that in subsequent election all four would get in. I told them decide for themselves keeping in view furtherance Congress policy. Now too late withdrawal but certainly Congress Sikhs must stand in new election for constituent assembly. You know Punjab position better please advise them directly on my behalf.

## 26. Misunderstanding Over Sikh Representation<sup>1</sup>

I am reluctant to say anything now which might add to the confusion created in regard to Congress Sikhs in the Punjab. Therefore I issued a brief statement yesterday. But there appears to be a great deal of misunderstanding and I am amazed at the extraordinary conclusions drawn by some people. It is obvious that every Congressman, whoever he might be, must follow Congress policy. I have no authority, even as Congress President, to vary that policy or to issue mandates or exemptions.

In regard to election matters, I have kept entirely aloof for all these years, even when I was President on the last occasion. Such matters have been dealt with by Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel. My involuntary intrusion on this occasion, when I was overwhelmed with work and had no time or opportunity to consult my colleagues, has evidently not been happy and has added to the mess. This mess began when, owing to some misunderstanding, Congress Sikhs in the Punjab committed themselves to a policy opposed to the obvious Congress policy in regard to the constituent assembly elections. I learnt of this with amazement in Bombay and immediately communicated with Sardar Partap Singh and Colonel Gill. Later I was informed that these commitments had put the Congress Sikhs in a very difficult situation and they were being accused of dishonourable conduct. I could not get all the facts owing to difficulties in the way of communication. Nor had I the time to get full information or to consult my colleagues. I was told that the Congress Sikhs and, indeed, others also would be able to line up with Congress policy completely if they were given a certain latitude in the way of approach so that they could get over the charge levelled against them.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 18 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 19 July 1946.



In the circumstances I felt, perhaps wrongly, that I should explain Congress policy fully to them, impress upon them to follow it, but at the same time leave them to do it in the manner they thought best. I further said that the matter was not one for me to issue mandates. That could only be done by the Working Committee. I could only explain the Congress position. I felt that this friendly approach would be understood and appreciated. From subsequent events, it appears that I was wrong and what I said led to grave misunderstanding. For this I am to blame and I must apologise to all my colleagues. So far as I am concerned, there is no question of Congress policy being overridden by communal considerations or for any Congressman to go against Congress policy.

In future all matters relating to elections will be dealt with by Maulana Azad and Sardar Patel who are more competent to deal with them than I am.

## 27. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
20 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th July informing me in advance of the arrangements you propose to make for the representation of India at the Peace Conference. You will appreciate that I can say nothing about such arrangements in the present state of affairs, except to express my regret that on such an important occasion India should be "represented" in this way.<sup>2</sup> I would have imagined that it was almost better for no one to go on behalf of India rather than some persons who can in no way truly represent India. The absence of representation would in itself have conveyed a truer picture of the situation in India.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Collection.

2. Sir Samuel Runganadhan, who was India's High Commissioner in London, was selected to lead the Indian delegation to the Peace Conference at Paris.

## 28. Status of the Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>

Mr. Gupta's remarks<sup>2</sup> about my connection with Delhi strike a personal note. I do not know which place I can call my own. Everywhere the people shower love and affection on me. It is, however, strange that I found iron gates and bayonets obstructing my way to a place to which I feel attracted because of my connection with it.<sup>3</sup>

I may or may not be a resident of Delhi, but I have recently been in New Delhi continuously for three months. 'This period of three months has hardly ended when another period of negotiations will soon begin. I am not enamoured of a prolonged stay in Delhi.

I am just coming from the meeting of the Expert Committee which is engaged in preparing a draft constitution. The problems with which we are faced are very intricate. Firstly, there is the question of the organisation of the Congress work. The question of the constituent assembly is not half as important as the first task.

The work, which the Congress representatives will be called upon to undertake in the constituent assembly, is not merely a question of a legal argument. If we have no sanction behind us we cannot achieve anything by our participation in the constituent assembly. Similarly, we cannot solve other problems facing us in Kashmir, South Africa and Ceylon. The Congress is a mighty organisation today and the world looks towards Congress leaders as the builders, to a very great extent, of the destinies of India. We are naturally weighed down by heavy responsibility.

We will have to establish relations with other countries and send our ambassadors there. It will not be enough if the Viceroy's House is occupied by the president of the Indian Republic or is put to use as a hospital. We need vast human material to build up a strong and independent India. We will have to find several hundred people for undertaking diplomatic work in other countries. They cannot be produced overnight.

I want to make it clear beyond a shadow of doubt that what I had said at the Bombay press conference about the Congress attitude towards the constituent assembly was not an emotional outburst. It is

1. Speech at Delhi, 20 July 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 July 1946.
2. Lala Desh Bandhu Gupta recalled Jawaharlal's connection with Delhi and said that the people of Delhi were glad and proud of having Jawaharlal in their midst.
3. This is a reference to Jawaharlal's arrest on 20 June 1946 for defying the ban of the Maharaja of Kashmir on his entry into the State. See also *post*, section 6, sub-section, "Kashmir State."

absurd to suggest, as has been done in certain sections of the press, that I am carried away by emotions and make statements which create fresh complications. What I had said there was said deliberately, and my experience of the last 35 years of public work is behind it. What I had said at Bombay is still my view and I am not prepared to withdraw a jot from it.

It is true that the constituent assembly is not the result of a revolution although there were good many revolutionary influences at work for years, and there is a new outlook in the world, England and India. The constituent assembly into which we are going is not a revolutionary body. It is obvious that a revolutionary body cannot be brought into existence by the Viceroy or come as a gift from the Cabinet Mission. There are people who have criticised our decision to enter the constituent assembly on the ground that the assembly that has been offered is not the type of constituent assembly which we want.

On the other hand, there is another set of people who think that the constituent assembly is in the nature of a drafting committee where people who have knowledge of constitutional law will draft a constitution which will ultimately be presented before the British Government.

In my view both the groups are wrong in their approach. I am for a middle course.

The constituent assembly can be a useless body, as well as it can be a powerful instrument for achieving freedom. Its greatest merit is that, although it will be brought into existence by the British Government, we will have nothing to do with them after it has been set into motion. The constituent assembly will then be completely sovereign and will be able to do anything. Nobody can interfere in its work. The foreign rulers may be angry with the manner in which the constituent assembly conducts its business but they cannot dissolve it. Of course, it can commit suicide, but nobody else can kill it. The ruling power cannot directly influence its proceedings although it can do mischief from behind the *pardah*. It is a fallacy to think that the constitution drawn by the constituent assembly will be sent to London for ratification so that the British Government may put its seal on it.

So far as we are concerned our work will be over when the constitution is finally drawn up. We shall start on the basis that the constitution drawn by us has become effective. New elections will be held under the new constitution. We may have a provisional temporary government during the transition period between the drawing of the constitution and bringing it into operation. We may have our freedom through peaceful methods or after a conflict with the British Government.

As regards the question of safeguarding the rights of the minorities, we all recognise its importance. No constitution can work unless the minorities are satisfied. We shall not, however, brook any interference on the part of the ruling power on that score if they arrogate to themselves the functions of an arbitrator.

The other condition lays down that we shall have to enter into a treaty with the British Government. I want to make it clear that we shall not accept any dictation. The treaty between the two countries must be on the basis of absolute equality. If the British Government says that it will not accept any constitution unless certain conditions are accepted as part of a treaty we will resist such a stipulation which will be an imposition and also an attempt to blackmail us. In my opinion the two conditions are unworkable.

The statement of 16 May is cleverly worded, and parts of it are capable of several interpretations. Probably it is inevitable because the delegation wants to please all parties. There are some features in that statement which we intensely dislike. We have interpreted that statement in a particular way and the Cabinet delegation interprets it in a different manner. It must, however, be clearly understood that the Cabinet delegation's interpretation cannot be final. It has no more right than ourselves to interpret a State document after it has been issued. Only a court of law or the president of the constituent assembly is the competent authority to give interpretations at the appropriate time.

We have made our position abundantly clear in our statements and resolutions and we have clearly stated why we are going there. The Congress Working Committee is not bound by any conditions beyond their authoritative statements and letters and the members of the constituent assembly who are the elected representatives of the people will not be bound even to that extent. The constituent assembly as such is not bound by any conditions. The members of the assembly can change anything and everything by mutual agreement in the statement of May 16.

So far as we are concerned we shall act as a sovereign body. We are going to the constituent assembly in a constructive spirit, and not to create trouble or to wreck it. As long as we feel that the constituent assembly is drawing the charter of India's freedom we shall work in it. The moment we feel that it is not serving that purpose we shall end it. It is not our purpose to tear the statement of May 16 to pieces. We have our own interpretations on it and will stick to them.

Those who are opposed to participation in the constituent assembly have criticised that it will sidetrack the main issue of freedom. There are stages even in a revolution. We cannot say 'no' every time. There are stages in the history of the movement for freedom in every country

when you have to say 'yes' even though in saying so you may have to face a risk. There are bound to be stages between complete irresponsibility and undiluted freedom. Even if the British Government is defeated as a result of a conflict we cannot divest ourselves of our responsibility to frame a constitution. We have to change our strategy as the whole character of our movement has changed. It is all right when we have to fight the enemy and weaken him.

Now it is the question of preparing the country psychologically for undertaking the onerous responsibilities of running a government. We have to take into account the vast enthusiasm and the strength of the people in a free India.

I deplore careerism and opportunism in the Congress ranks which is a dangerous tendency. It is much more dangerous for us than the might of the British army. I want to purge the Congress organisation of all internal weaknesses.

There is much talk of leftism. The word 'leftism' does not mean anything clearly. I make it clear that there is scope in the Congress for the existence of all elements—the right, the left and the centre. But certain people who style themselves as leftists know nothing about leftism. I am strongly opposed to people in the Congress having labels of right and left. The door of the Congress is open to all. I emphasise the necessity of maintaining unity of action in the Congress.

We have proposed changes in the Congress constitution with a view to strengthening the organisation. We are contemplating the abolition of the four-anna membership. We want to enrol every adult man or woman who is willing to subscribe to the Congress creed. We want to make the Congress the mirror of the opinion, aspirations and ideals of the 400 million people of this country.

I stress the importance of setting up an efficient volunteer organisation under the command of Shah Nawaz. It is not enough for young people to take to uniforms. We want to have a network of volunteer organisations in every city and village. It is essential to inculcate the spirit of self-help among the people in the villages. Our aim is to have two crores of volunteers. The volunteers under their charge will have to follow the path of nonviolence.

I warn against being inactive. If after 300 Congress representatives have entered the constituent assembly the rest of us remain idle the Congress will become a useless organisation.

I deplore the attitude of the Sikhs. The Congress fully sympathise with them in their objection to the grouping of provinces. By abstaining from the constituent assembly, the Sikhs in my view have played into the hands of their opponents and weakened the position of their friends.

I want all groups to place the interest of the country before their sectional interest, as no progress is possible without independence. I remind the Sikhs that they cannot cut themselves away from the rest of their country.

I hope that the Pakistan issue will be buried once for all. I do not want to use compulsion. The Muslims themselves are beginning to realise that Pakistan is not in their interest. Pakistan is only possible as a feudatory state under British domination.

I have been elected President of the Congress at a critical juncture. The sense of loyalty to the organisation has prompted me to accept the heavy responsibilities of the office. I think that the responsibilities of the Congress President are in no way lighter than the responsibilities attached to the highest offices in the world. I have derived strength from the confidence that you place in me and the support that you extend to me and I shall be able to carry on the responsibilities of my office as long as you continue to support me.

The transfer of power may be peaceful or may be the result of another struggle. We should be ready for every contingency. The transition from British rule to freedom is a difficult one. The British Government has been forced by the circumstances to start negotiations for a settlement. It is sincerely anxious to agree to our demand. At the same time, it is making preparations for crushing any movement that might be launched by us if the negotiations fail. It is always haunted by the fear of another struggle. We must also be prepared for a fight, if a fight comes.

## 29. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

I spoke first of all about the Sikhs and said that I recognised the importance of their filling their four seats for the constituent assembly if possible.<sup>2</sup> I was considering what could be done about it, but I had up to the present received no request from the Sikhs for a fresh opportunity

1. Delhi, 22 July 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 104-106.
2. The Sikhs, entitled to four seats in the constituent assembly, had decided to boycott the election for these seats because of their opposition to compulsory grouping. At one stage, on Jawaharlal's advice, the Congress Sikhs filed nominations but a rift between them and the Akalis, who also nominated their candidates, led to the withdrawal of all Sikh candidates.

to elect representatives, and found some difficulty in taking any action without a request. I asked Nehru whether he had any suggestions about the procedure. He said that the Sikhs had been stupid about it, and that he himself had also acted foolishly in leaving it to their good sense, instead of giving them direct instructions what to do. He agreed with the importance of getting Sikhs elected if possible. I said I was examining what could be done.

I then spoke about his visit to Kashmir and hoped that he would not cause any trouble at this critical time. He said that he had no intention of causing trouble, but that he felt it would be difficult to prevent crowds gathering to see him. I said that I hoped that the presence of crowds, if they did gather, would not excite him as they usually appeared to do. He said that it was never the crowds that excited him, but the lack of common sense in other people. I told him that I had obligations towards the Kashmir Government, and very much hoped that he would be very careful to create no incident.

I think he genuinely does not intend to cause trouble of any kind, but his tendency to go off the deep end must make his visit an anxiety. I hope that the State authorities will act with all circumspection.

I then went on to the question of the services and the demand for a general enquiry in the United Provinces, Bihar, and Central Provinces, into the 1942 disturbances.<sup>3</sup> Nehru was very reasonable about this, said that he did not wish any general enquiry, and that his advice was against it. Public feeling was, however, strong, especially against certain individuals. Would it not be possible to retire these individuals? I said that if he would advise premiers against any general enquiry, Governors would be prepared to discuss with them individual cases where there was well substantiated evidence that the bounds of duty had been exceeded in any way. Nehru was very quiet and sensible about this, and I hope that he may succeed in preventing any general enquiries.

I mentioned to him that Khizr had been invited to attend the Peace Conference as a representative of India, and he merely remarked that he would be a picturesque addition. He said that he had no feeling about whether Jayakar went one way or the other.

He then spoke about the prorogation of the Sind Assembly by the Governor, which he described as most extraordinary and unfortunate, especially since the opposition wished to discuss a motion about Sind's participation in Group B in the constituent assembly. I told him that

3. Resolutions and questions directed against Government officials and demanding inquiries into incidents in 1942 had been tabled in the U.P. and the C.P. legislatures in June 1946.

the Governor was considering calling a further meeting of the assembly at an early date, but that I rather doubted whether the Sind assembly was the right place to discuss the grouping question, which was a matter for the constituent assembly.

He then asked how the summonses to the constituent assembly would be issued. I said that I presumed that I should issue them. He thought that they should be issued through Speakers of the assemblies. I rather suspect this may be a move towards strengthening the claim of the constituent assembly to be a sovereign body elected by the representatives of the people, with which the Viceroy has therefore nothing whatever to do; and it may be in this way an attempt to get away from the authority of the declaration of May 16th. I should like advice on this.

He then spoke about the secretariat to the constituent assembly, and asked what arrangements were being made. He indicated that he was apprehensive that the procedure of the constituent assembly might be too much crystallised before the assembly ever met. I told him that we were arranging a secretariat, but there was no intention to lay down any detailed procedure. I suspect that this again is a move towards getting away from the Groups, since he specially mentioned that it seemed premature to arrange a secretariat for the Groups.

He then mentioned that the Europeans in the United Provinces had voted, apparently in order to secure the election of Sir J.P. Srivastava; and indicated that legal action might be taken to object to the European votes.

He finally mentioned the recent appointment of a High Court judge at Allahabad, I think the name was Mansur Ali, who he said was completely unfitted for the appointment, and that his selection had caused much feeling. I said that I supposed I must have approved the appointment, but that I did not know any of the particulars, and presumed that the appointment was made on the recommendation of the Chief Justice. He agreed that this was so, but implied that the selection was an act of gross favouritism.

This ended the interview which lasted about 40 minutes. Nehru's attitude was very friendly throughout. At the end I gave him the letter about the formation of an interim government, which he took away with him unopened.<sup>4</sup>

4. The Viceroy, on 22 July 1946, wrote identical letters to Jawaharlal and Jinnah asking whether their respective parties would be willing to enter an interim government consisting of 14 members, six (including a scheduled caste representative) to be nominated by the Congress, five by the Muslim League and three, representing the minorities, by the Viceroy.



### 30. To Gopinath Bardoloi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 July 1946

My dear Bardoloi,

I have read in the papers a brief summary of the resolution your Assembly has passed at your instance in regard to grouping.<sup>2</sup> I have not seen the full text but I think I have seen enough of it to be able to form some opinion. I feel that you have rather mixed up section with grouping. It does not necessarily follow that you should boycott a section. The two are entirely apart. A section may definitely decide not to form a group and yet may continue as a section to consider a provincial constitution. Again it may be argued that within the section, both for the purpose of grouping or for any other purpose, a province cannot be overridden by others. Thus in making provincial constitutions the representatives of one province need not be outvoted by others. These and many other questions arise and will have to be determined by us and ultimately by the constituent assembly or the chairman thereof.

In view of this it seems rather premature to direct your representatives not to go even to a section meeting. Possibly that might be desirable, but certainly it cannot be said so definitely now, however much you might be opposed to grouping. I wanted to point this out to you immediately so that you may consider the situation and not find yourself suddenly faced by a difficulty of your own making. I feel that to decide against the Group was right and proper, but to bring in the Section was unnecessary.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71/1946-47, p. 99, N.M.M.L.
2. A resolution passed in the Assam Legislative Assembly made it mandatory for the representatives of Assam in the constituent assembly not to participate in section or group.

### 31. To Congress Prime Ministers of Provinces<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 July 1946

Dear Friend,

In regard to the constituent assembly, it seems to me desirable that persons elected to it should bring their credentials with them for presenta-

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946, N.M.M.L. This letter was seen in the mail by the Government. Printed in *The Transfer of Power*, Vol. VIII, pp. 131-132.

tion before the assembly or some proper authority appointed by the constituent assembly. These credentials can take the shape of letters of delegation issued by the Speaker of the Provincial Assembly. This is not a mere matter of form.

We want this assembly to function as much as possible as an independent sovereign authority and the less it has to do with the Government of India apparatus the better. The bringing of the letters of delegation by the members of the constituent assembly and their proper presentation to the chairman would add to the solemnity of the procedure and would emphasise the independence of the constituent assembly.

The Viceroy may, of course, issue a summons to the members. If this is done we can treat it as a mere formality, attaching far more importance to our letters of delegation from the Speaker of our Legislative Assembly.

I would request you to pass on this suggestion to the Speaker of your Legislative Assembly. Such letters of delegation should be issued not only to the members of the Provincial Assembly who have been elected but also to non-members who have been elected.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Viceroy minuted on the intercepted copy on 29 July 1946: "This shows the way the wind is blowing. We should let S. of S. know about it."

### 32. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have given careful consideration to your letter of 22nd July which you gave me yesterday. I agree with you that publicity in the press or otherwise does not do any good when delicate negotiations have to be carried on. So far as I am concerned, I shall see to it that the press has no knowledge of it. But it is not possible for me, even as Congress President, to function by myself in such matters without any reference to my colleagues. Inevitably I shall have to consult my colleagues.

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 112-113.

This becomes even more necessary because the situation itself has changed in many ways since we discussed these matters and much has happened which has to be taken into consideration in arriving at a decision. You will remember our telling you at our last meeting that it would not be possible to pick up again the old threads where they had been left off. That chapter had come to an end and an entirely new approach would have to be made. Since then a meeting of the All India Congress Committee has been held and the whole subject reviewed. A new Working Committee (though it has many of the old members in it) has been formed.

Apart from this, our experience of the previous talks has demonstrated that there is little hope of a successful issue along the old line of approach. And even if there was some temporary arrangement, this could not last or be capable of dealing with the urgent problems of the day. The all-India strikes that are taking place are evidence of the tension in the country and the accumulation of many problems whose solution has been postponed for so long. Only a strong government with clear objectives can deal with this situation effectively. Such a government cannot be formed in the manner suggested.

You have referred to the letter you wrote to Maulana Azad on 30th May regarding the status of the interim government. The assurances<sup>3</sup> you gave then were very far from satisfying us, but in our urgent desire to find a way out, we did not raise any further objections on this score. You will remember that we have all along attached the greatest importance to what we have called the 'independence in action' of the provisional government. This meant that the government should have perfect freedom and that the Governor General should function as a constitutional head only. Anything else would be more or less a copy of the Executive Council with, of course, some obvious differences.

It is on the basis of this 'independence in action', and on this basis only, that a satisfactory approach to the problem can be made. Once this is acknowledged and admitted you will find, I think, that other relatively minor issues do not offer much difficulty. That acknowledgment would affect even the formation of the government. It would not be proper then for the Governor General to select representatives of the minorities, as you have suggested in your letter.

This question of the status and powers of the provisional interim government has, therefore, to be decided first in unambiguous language.

3. The Viceroy promised that he would give the greatest possible freedom to the interim government within the constitution in the exercise of the day-to-day administration of the country.

That status does not mean some kind of vague international status but internally—the functioning at home as an independent government though with certain inevitable drawbacks due to the existing circumstances.

I am not writing to you about the other matters<sup>4</sup> mentioned in your letter as those can only be considered after the status and powers have been finally and satisfactorily decided. But I shall have much to say about other matters also at a later stage.

In view of what I have written above, I am wholly unable to cooperate in the formation of a government as suggested by you. So far as I know the mind of the Congress they would want the political independence issue settled before they can enter any government.

I am going to Kashmir tomorrow morning. On the 29th I shall be passing through Delhi on my way to Allahabad. On the 8th August and subsequent days we are having a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at Wardha.<sup>5</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. One important matter was that the Viceroy would welcome a convention, as offered by the Congress, that major communal issues could be decided only by the assent of both major parties.
5. Wavell did not reply to this letter but proposed to discuss matters with Jawaharlal. Pethick-Lawrence agreed that Wavell should see Jawaharlal, but suggested that if agreement could not be reached the Congress and the Muslim League might be asked to send representatives to London to discuss the position. Wavell also would participate in the talks.

### 33. To A. K. Azad<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 July 1946

My dear Maulana,

I enclose some papers. There are two letters<sup>2</sup> I have addressed to the Congress premiers and correspondence with the Viceroy. These papers will speak for themselves.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. See letters of 22 July 1946, *ante*, item 31 and *post*, section 7.

I mentioned the Sind muddle to the Viceroy and he said that many mistakes have been committed there partly by the Governor, chiefly by the Speaker. He was trying to have an early session of the assembly there, but the month of *Ramzan* came in the way. Jairamdas asked my opinion as to what they should do and I have telegraphed to him that the 31 members who are against grouping should say so in writing and demand an early session of the legislature, also a chance for a vote of no-confidence.

About the Sikhs, the Viceroy said that he would gladly give them a chance by having another election. He was waiting for them to ask him for it.

It is important that we have a meeting of the Working Committee soon. The earliest date suitable to Gandhiji is the 8th August at Wardha. I have wired to you accordingly.

I drew the Viceroy's attention to the Europeans voting in the U.P. and told him this might lead to the election being challenged and invalidated.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

#### 34. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

I am sending you a sheaf of papers. Copy of two letters which I have addressed to the Congress Premiers. Copies of letter from Viceroy and my answer. Letter with its enclosure from Colonel Gill (of the I.N.A.). Copy of a letter to Gopinath Bardoloi.

About the Sikh position, I have definitely told Gill to approach you and he has agreed to do so. The kind of assurances he wants from the Congress have partly been given by you and me, and for the rest I do not think, especially at the present moment, that it will be desirable for us to make any public statements. However, it is for you to judge. I have met Partap Singh Kairon also and heard his tale of woe. He showed me

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence 1945-50*, Vol. 3, pp. 258-260.

the telegram you have sent him. About Gill, I am afraid that he is totally inexperienced in political matters and he is thinking only of Panthic unity. He is very able and he created a good impression upon me, but he has a reputation for unreliability.

I saw the Viceroy today and we talked about a variety of subjects. About Sikhs, he was perfectly prepared to give them another chance of election, but somebody must approach him and ask him for it. I asked him as to who was to approach him. He wasn't quite clear as he said there were so many groups among the Sikhs. Anyway, he is quite willing to fix another election up and I believe he has written to the Governor about it. I am likely to see some people in Lahore on my way to Kashmir. I shall mention this fact to them. You can also take such steps as you consider proper.

I spoke to the Viceroy about Sind also. He agreed that many mistakes have been made, but he cast the blame more on the Speaker than on Mudie. However, he said that he would try to have an early session of the Sind Assembly arranged. His only difficulty was, he said, the month of *Ramzan*.

I had a telegram from Jairamdas today asking what they should do. He said that a majority of the members of the Assembly were prepared to declare themselves in writing against grouping. I have suggested to him that these members should so declare themselves and ask for an early session of the assembly for this purpose as well as for a no-confidence motion against the provincial government.

You will see what I have written to the Congress Premiers. I need not add anything to it.

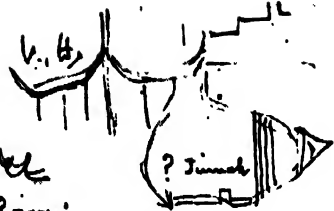
The Viceroy's letter and my reply to it will speak for themselves. I think we should have an early meeting of the Working Committee to consider all these vital problems before us. I wired to Bapu inquiring what date and place would suit him. He has said Wardha after 7 August. So I am thinking of fixing 8 August at Wardha.

The Expert Committee has done some good preliminary work here. Munshi will tell you about it. I am thinking of calling the next meeting of this committee in Bombay on 12 August immediately after the Working Committee.

My provisional programme is: Kashmir 24th to 27th or 28th, then back to Allahabad *via* Delhi reaching Allahabad on the 30th. I shall remain there for a few days and then go to Wardha.

I am writing to Maulana Azad also in regard to some of the subjects mentioned above and sending him copies of my correspondence with the Viceroy. I am not sending these or mentioning anything about them

13/6



Smelling in  
low level

- 1 Defense - M.L.
- 2 Finance - Rajgiri
- 3 Home - V. Patil

4 Ex. Off. J. J. J.

5 Communication M.L. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~

6 Food & Agr. Raj. Rand.

7 Industries & Efficiencies - M.L.

8 Commerce - Mathas

9 Health - M.L.

10 Education - women? Amrit Kaur.

11 Labour - Sch. Caste Rep.

12 Mines - W. K. P. M. S. L.

13 Law + Inform. M.L.



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+ Convention is common matter (Lamun)

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to the people  
for their happiness.

Inner cabinet + outer cabinet  
Difficulties.

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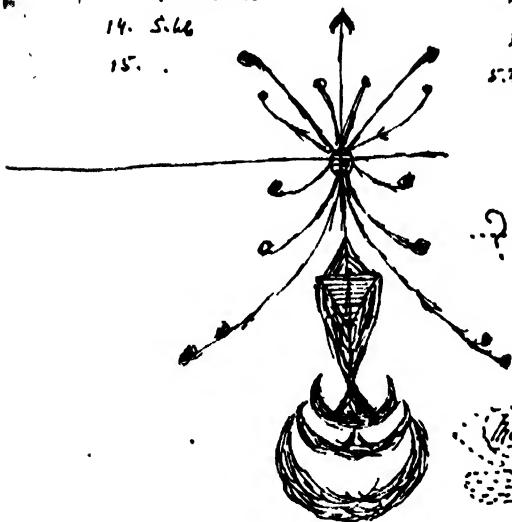
common policy - under the path

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for help!

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1. Zahir Hussain
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1. Mathias
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12. J. N.
13. Vallabhai
14. S. G.
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- Jh ✓  
 VEP ✓  
 R. ✓  
 Rajaji ✓  
 (P.O. Sphalawany (yengar)  
 Deshmukh ✓  
 (M. Pillai) - Jagjivan Ram  
 1. Linget Ali ✓  
 2. Jinnah ✓  
 3. Ismail Khan ✓  
 4. Nazimuddin ✓  
 5. Zahir Hussain ✓  
 Baldev Singh ✓  
 Mathias ✓  
 Anthony ✓





to anyone else. You will, of course, when you have the chance, show them to Bapu.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 35. Sovereignty of the Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>

Question: What is your reaction to the Muslim League's resolution<sup>2</sup> to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals?

Jawaharlal Nehru: 'The full resolution would have to be studied before any comment could be made. I reiterate the sovereign nature of the constituent assembly — a view which has been challenged by the Muslim League. The constituent assembly would not be sovereign in the sense of an established power. A regiment could be sent to put it down. What is meant by a sovereign constituent assembly is that no outside authority can interfere with its decisions. It will be a body with which the British Government cannot interfere.

When this question was put to the Cabinet Mission in our correspondence with it, the Cabinet Mission agreed to our interpretation on two conditions — firstly the protection of the minorities and a treaty between England and India. As regards the solution of the minority problem, that is our lookout and not of Britain. As regards a treaty, the very idea is based on the conception that there shall be a free and independent India and we cannot admit that a treaty shall be dictated to India rather than being freely entered into by a sovereign India. That is where the sovereignty of the constituent assembly counts.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 29 July 1946. Based on reports from *National Herald*, 30 July and *The Hindu*, 31 July 1946.
2. In a resolution on 29 July 1946, the Muslim League Council complained of a breach of faith with it by Wavell in respect of the negotiations for the setting up of an interim government and noted that the speeches of the Congress leaders, especially Jawaharlal's press conference on 10 July 1946, signified Congress non-acceptance of "any of the terms of the fundamentals of the scheme". The council, therefore, resolved to withdraw "its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's proposals". In a second resolution, the League council alleged that "the Congress is bent upon setting up caste Hindu Raj... with the connivance of the British", and stated its conviction "that now the time has come for the Muslim nation to resort to direct action to achieve Pakistan."

**Q:** Does the State Paper support the interpretation of sovereignty?

**JN:** In certain places the document itself is self-contradictory, but there are in it certain basic provisions. If certain secondary provisions contradict the primary provisions then the primary provisions should have first place. Ultimately the interpretation of any such point is not that of the Congress or of the League, but what the document itself says.

**Q:** Who, do you think, will be the final arbitrator of this?

**JN:** I think it will be the chairman of the constituent assembly and the Federal Court.

### **36. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>**

I saw Nehru today. He was friendly but subdued. I then said the resolution of the Muslim League had changed the situation since we last met. I said that it was most unfortunate, but I thought that Nehru must recognise that what the League had done was partly reaction from the rather intemperate statements made by some of the Congress leaders since the meeting of the A.I.C.C. in Bombay; I referred in particular to his own unguarded language in his interview with the press after that meeting. I said that it would be most unfortunate if we did not succeed in getting the Muslim League to join in the constituent assembly, since obviously it would be impossible to frame a complete constitution without the Muslims. I said that Congress now had a chance of showing real statesmanship and of giving the Muslim League assurances that would bring them into the constituent assembly. Nehru said that he agreed that it would be most unfortunate if the Muslim League did not enter the constituent assembly, but he did not quite see what assurances could be given to them; they certainly could not be given an assurance of Pakistan. I said that the principal grievance of the League against the Congress leaders made them believe that it was not intended to give the Group system, on the basis of which the Muslim League had agreed to join, a fair chance. I referred specially to the Congress reservations in their acceptance of the statement of May 16. Nehru said that the Muslim League had also made reservations. I pointed out that these were

1. Delhi, 30 July 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 144-146.

long-term reservations, on a possible Pakistan a number of years ahead; whereas the Congress reservations were short-term ones and affected the immediate issue.

Nehru then began on the legal interpretation of various articles and sentences in the statement of May 16, such as have already been well ventilated. I said that I was neither a lawyer nor a politician but a plain man and I knew what the intentions were of the people who drew up this document, and it seemed to me to be pure casuistry to try and force different interpretations out of it. Nehru merely said that there were points in the document which would have to be interpreted, and that the Congress had intended to refer these to the Federal Court, not just to force them through by weight of votes.

He then asked what was going to be done about the constituent assembly now that the Muslim League had declined to participate. I said that obviously it was impossible to make a constitution for India without the participation of the Muslims. We were pledged to go ahead as far as possible with any party that accepted the statement of May 16, but that I did not see how, without the Muslims, we could get much farther than a constitution for the "A" Group provinces. Nehru then said that the intention of Congress had been to form a committee of all parties at the first meeting of the constituent assembly, to discuss the implications of the central subjects, not to extend them, in order to give the groups some sort of basis on which to work. He instanced the matter of foreign loans, i.e., would provinces be entitled to raise their own loans abroad independently, or would there be some general policy based on the credit of India as a whole.

Nehru went on to refer to the making of the American constitution. He said that if the British went there would be a vacuum which would have to be filled. We discussed the framing of the American constitution for a little, and he said that his point was that if it was clear that things were going to go ahead the Muslim League would be forced to come in and take part; the fatal thing would be if they were given to believe that they could hold matters up indefinitely by intransigence.

### 37. The Wave of Revolution<sup>1</sup>

I am sorry about the Muslim League's decision to withdraw its acceptance of the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16, as also the method in

1. Address to students of Allahabad University, 1 August 1946. From the *National Herald*, 2 August 1946.

which it has expressed it. But I am not worried about the decision and I assure you that you need not be worried. The country cannot remain where it is today; it has to march towards independence.

India is bound to attain its independence. No one can stop it. The decision of the League, or such other matters, may delay the dawn of independence, but it cannot stop it.

When we ask the British to go we hope to solve our problems ourselves, together with the League, in the constituent assembly, without their intervention. Instead of coming into the assembly for the mutual settlement, the League asks the British to stay.

The Congress has undoubtedly a majority in the constituent assembly.<sup>2</sup> But it does not mean that it will overlook the interests of the minorities. It cannot act in a selfish way. But even supposing that it does, we could have fought, we could have quarrelled together and solved these problems.

I congratulate the elder statesmen in the Muslim League on their decision to renounce British titles. I will not make any detailed comments on the League's reversal of its Delhi decision as the Congress Working Committee, at its meeting in Wardha, will consider the matter.

I reiterate my assertion that we cannot solve our problems unless the constituent assembly has sovereign status. I make it clear that by the sovereignty of the assembly I mean that there is to be no interference by the British Government in the assembly's work or its decisions. It will not be the sovereignty of one party inside the assembly over the other.

The Congress could never have decided to go into the constituent assembly if the assembly had not this sovereign status. The Cabinet Mission has accepted the sovereignty of the assembly subject to settlement on two matters—treaty between India and Britain and the question of minorities. Of course, there will have to be a treaty between India and Britain for the transfer of power, and the minorities question will have to be suitably settled.

The current wave of strikes and hartals in the country is an indication of the rottenness of the British administration. The strikes are like boils and ulcers in the administration of the British Government which have been here always, but are now ripe and are bursting out. It is beyond the power of the British Government to cure them. The wave of *inquilab* has touched everything now and it is for Indians themselves to solve their problems.

2. In the elections to the constituent assembly held between 11 and 22 July 1946, the Congress got 201 of the 210 general seats while the Muslim League obtained all but 5 of the 78 seats reserved for Muslims.

But if the British Government thinks that it can put clauses or dictate how this subject of a treaty or how the question of minorities should be settled, the Congress will not accept it, for that will affect the sovereign status of the assembly.

We cannot solve our problems unless the constituent assembly has a sovereign status. By the sovereign status, we remove the third party which is coming in the way of solving our problems. My idea of the sovereign status of the constituent assembly is that there will be no interference by the British Government. We will sit together without this intervention in the assembly, and mutually settle our problems.

I feel that a few isolated measures cannot solve the present strike wave. The whole economic standard of the country has to be raised and a balance to be maintained between the lowest and the highest. This can only be done when the country becomes independent and it has its own means of raising money and balancing the standards of different sections of the community.

I disapprove the policy of those who are criticising the Congress decision to go into the constituent assembly.<sup>3</sup> I feel that a time comes when every man or organisation has to shoulder responsibility. The only thing to be considered at this time is that none should be wrongly caught in it.

The Congress, after mature thinking and in accordance with the wishes of the country, has decided to go into the constituent assembly. The step has been taken. It is useless, therefore, now to criticise this step. Everyone in the country should now strengthen the Congress and see that it treads on the right path and is not misled.

3. The left wing of the Congress, led by Jayaprakash Narayan, refused to stand for the constituent assembly, which they denounced as a British fabrication.

### 38. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

My dear Pantji,

Swarup has given me your letter of the 3rd. The Central Provinces Speaker has sent me a copy of the letter of delegation he is issuing to the members elected for the constituent assembly. I enclose a copy of this for your information as well as Tandonji's.

1. J.N. Collection. Extracts.

I think it is not very proper for Damodar Swarup and others of the C.S.P. to resign from the constituent assembly after election. However, that is for them to decide. For the present there is no method of filling a vacancy. This will be one of the first items to be tackled by the constituent assembly itself.

You say that the conduct of Srivastava and the European Group cannot be overlooked. I agree, but exactly what can be done in the matter? I suppose the election can be challenged in the constituent assembly itself. Will that challenge upset the whole of the U.P. election or can it be confined? Can the Speaker here take any steps? I do not know that all this is worth inquiry.

I am sorry the Working Committee meeting has overlapped your Assembly session. The way to Wardha is difficult and takes a lot of time. I do not know how you are going....

The Working Committee has a tremendous deal of work to do, and being a new Committee it may take a little more time than usual. I shall try my best to proceed in a business-like manner. But the questions before us are deep and intricate.

I have written separately to you and you will receive several other letters from me in an envelope.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

### 39. The Future of the Nagas<sup>1</sup>

It is obvious that the Naga territory in eastern Assam is much too small to stand by itself, politically or economically. It lies between two huge countries, India and China, and part of it consists of rather backward people, who require considerable help. When India is independent, as it is bound to be soon, it is not possible for the British Government to hold the Naga territory or any part of it. They would be isolated there between India and China.

1. Jawaharlal's letter to Sashi Sier, President of the Naga Hills National Council, who met him in Allahabad on 4 August 1946 and discussed the future of the Naga Hills territory in eastern Assam. Printed in the *National Herald*, 6 August 1946.

Inevitably, therefore, this Naga territory must form part of India and of Assam with which it has developed such close association.

At the same time, it is our policy that tribal areas should have as much freedom and autonomy as possible so that they can live their own lives according to their own customs and desires. Thus, the solution would be that the Naga territory should be an integral part of India and of Assam with a measure of autonomy for its own purposes. How this should be worked out is a matter for further consideration between the peoples concerned. So far as I can see, there is no reason why there should be any excluded area apart from the rest of India.

The whole Naga territory should go together and should be controlled, in a large measure, by an elected Naga national council. At the same time, the Nagas should have representation in the Assam provincial assembly and should participate fully in the life of the province.

I am glad that the Naga National Council stands for the solidarity of all the Naga tribes, including those who live in the so-called unadministered territory. I agree entirely with your decision that the Naga Hills should constitutionally be included in an autonomous Assam in a free India with local autonomy and due safeguards for the interests of the Nagas. As for separate electorates for the Nagas, I am not clear in my mind as to how this will work. Generally speaking, we are against separate electorates as these limit and injure a small group by keeping it separated from the rest of the nation. But, if the Naga territory is given a measure of autonomy, some arrangement will have to be made for their proper representation.

As you know, the Congress is opposed to any forcible grouping of Assam with Bengal. We are of the opinion that this is a matter for each province to decide. Assam has already expressed its opinion on the subject. What the future will be I cannot say. I cannot conceive of Assam being compelled against its will to form a group with Bengal.

An advisory committee will be elected by the constituent assembly. It should have representatives of the tribal areas, and I hope that the tribal territories of Assam will be directly represented on it. The findings and decisions of the advisory committee will probably not be finally binding upon the constituent assembly, but they are bound to carry great weight. I imagine the findings will be accepted almost in their entirety unless they go against some direct provision in the constitution.

As I have said above, the excluded areas should be incorporated with the other areas. It may be that certain special provisions for their protection and development are made. I should like them to be treated as part of the entire Naga territory. I see no reason whatever why an extraneous judicial system should be enforced upon the Naga Hills. They

should have perfect freedom to continue their village panchayats, tribal courts etc., according to their own wishes. Indeed, it is our wish that the judicial system of India should be revised, giving a great deal of power to village panchayats.

About the unadministered territory which still contains, according to you, a number of head-hunters, I cannot definitely say when and in what manner it should be brought into the province. That is to be decided in consultation with the people concerned. Naturally, some special provision will have to be made to develop these people.

The question of common language must also be finally decided by the Nagas themselves. The only two possible languages which would be helpful to them are Assamese or Hindustani. Most of them know Assamese already. I think it would be desirable to encourage Hindustani as this will bring them in touch with the various changes and developments taking place in India.

Assam is still largely undeveloped, and there is plenty of room for agricultural, horticultural and industrial development. This development should be so organised as to benefit the people of the soil. Certainly, the people of the Naga Hills should not be exploited by others, and their right to own and work on the soil should remain with them. We would be entirely against the development of large estates owned by outsiders there. What form the land ownership should take, whether it should be communal, cooperative or a kind of a peasant proprietorship, should be determined in consultation with the people concerned.

I might add that I am specially interested in these tribal areas not only in the north-east of India but in the north-west as well as the centre. They present different problems. I hope that in an independent India there will be a special department, both in the Centre and in the provinces concerned, for the protection and advancement of tribal areas. I do not want them to be swamped by people from other parts of the country, who might go there to exploit them to their own advantage.

#### **40. The Sikhs and the Constituent Assembly<sup>1</sup>**

The Working Committee have learnt with regret of the decision of the Sikhs not to seek election to the constituent assembly. The Committee

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Working Committee at Wardha on 9 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946, p. 151, N.M.M.L.



are aware that injustice has been done to the Sikhs and they have drawn the attention of the Cabinet delegation to it. They are however strongly of opinion that the Sikhs would serve their cause and the cause of the country's freedom better by participation in the constituent assembly than by keeping out of it. The Committee therefore appeal to the Sikhs to reconsider their decision and express their willingness to take part in the constituent assembly. The Working Committee assure the Sikhs that the Congress will give them all possible support in removing their legitimate grievances and in securing adequate safeguards for the protection of their just interests in the Punjab.<sup>2</sup>

2. In response to this resolution, the Sikh Panthic Board decided on 14 August 1946 to accept the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16 May 1946 and advised the Sikh M.L.A.s to elect their representatives to the constituent assembly. But as there was no provision in the Cabinet Mission plan for by-elections, these elections did not take place until much later.

#### **41. Freedom In a Year<sup>1</sup>**

In another year, we will be free. The Quit India Resolution adopted four years ago remains to be fulfilled, but I am sure that within a short time, India will achieve its independence, because of its inherent strength and the force of world circumstances.

The next two years will be most critical and, to meet the situation, whatever it might be, there should be a united effort. Despite differing individual views, or the views of groups, all should pull together and carry out the decisions of the Congress. That way lies salvation. Without the strength of the people, their cooperation and coordinated efforts, Swaraj cannot be won, and even if freedom comes, it cannot be maintained.

Many problems await solution, economic, social, and communal. I deplore the claims made by various communities for their own welfare and benefit, thus forgetting the larger interests of the country as a whole.

I do not think that the decision of the Muslim League reveals a correct attitude. The League has now adopted the same policy which the

1. Address to a meeting held in observance of August Nine, Wardha, 9 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 August 1946.

Congress adopted 26 years ago. But the League is not following the Congress policy in its fundamentals, but merely copying it in certain respects. We shall not be disturbed by threats of violence or frightening speeches.

We may have to face the threat. It is possible the League might change its approach. Whether it is the League or the British, we must be prepared to face the situation.

I pay my tribute to those who died in the August movement in 1942.

## 42. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Personal and Secret

Wardha  
August 10, 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of August 6th which reached me on the evening of August 8th.

I have consulted my Committee and Mr. Gandhi in regard to the proposal<sup>2</sup> you have made, with the concurrence of the British Government, to entrust the formation of the provisional national government to me as President of the Congress. I have accepted the advice of my colleagues to undertake this responsibility, and I am, therefore, in a position to place before you our proposals for the formation of this government. I may say at once that my Committee and myself have in mind a government which will consist of good representatives of the main elements in India.

We would have welcomed the formation of a coalition government with the Muslim League. But, in view of the resolution adopted by and the statement<sup>3</sup> recently made on behalf of the Muslim League it

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 218-219.
2. Wavell invited Jawaharlal to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government on the basis of the assurances given in his letter of 30 May 1946 to Maulana Azad. He sent a copy of his letter to Mahatma Gandhi with the hope that he would use his "great influence to secure the acceptance by the Congress Working Committee of my proposal."
3. On 29 July 1946, after the Muslim League resolved to launch direct action on 16 August 1946, Jinnah declared: "Never have we in the whole history of the League done anything except by constitutional means and by constitutionalism. But now...we bid goodbye to constitutional methods." In negotiations with the Cabinet Mission the British Government and the Congress had each held a pistol in its hand, the one of authority and arms, the other of mass struggle and noncooperation. "Today we have also forged a pistol and are in a position to use it."

is not possible to expect that they will agree to cooperate at this stage. Any premature attempt to induce them to do so might produce a contrary result. Such an attempt will inevitably become public and result in communal controversy and further delay which you rightly deprecate.

It seems to us that the best course is for you to make a public announcement to the effect that you have invited the President of the Congress to form the provisional government and that he has accepted your invitation. It will then be possible for us to approach the Muslim League and invite its cooperation. We shall welcome that cooperation but, if this is denied us, we shall be prepared to go ahead without it.

I shall gladly meet you to discuss this matter further. I expect to be in Wardha so long as our Working Committee lasts. Probably I shall go to Bombay for some important engagements on the 14th evening and spend some days there. My address in Bombay is 20 Carmichael Road.

I am sending this letter through the Governor of the Central Provinces.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

4. Wavell replied on 12 August 1946 that he would announce: "The Viceroy with the approval of His Majesty's Government has invited the President of the Congress to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government and the President of the Congress has accepted the invitation. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru will shortly visit New Delhi to discuss his proposals with the Viceroy". He added, "I have no doubt that when my announcement is made you will wish to indicate publicly your desire to secure in the interests of the country a fully representative coalition government."

#### 43. To Henry Twynam<sup>1</sup>

Wardha  
August 10, 1946

Dear Sir Henry,<sup>2</sup>

I am sending you, enclosed with this letter, a cover addressed to H.E. Lord Wavell, New Delhi. I shall be grateful to you if you could kindly

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Henry Twynam (1887-1966); entered Indian Civil Service, 1909; Governor of the Central Provinces and Berar, 1940-46.

have this sent to the Viceroy as speedily as possible. This letter is in answer to a communication received by me here from Lord Wavell. It was his desire that our correspondence should be kept secret. I have therefore taken the liberty to trouble you in this matter as no doubt you can make the necessary arrangements for both secrecy and expeditious despatch.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### **44. Telegram to the Private Secretary to the Viceroy<sup>1</sup>**

13 August 1946

I have received two messages from the Viceroy for which I thank him. I am agreeable to his making announcement suggested. I am afraid it is difficult for me to go to Delhi straight from Wardha. I have to be here till the evening of August 14th. After that I should like to go to Bombay at least for a day or two. I can try to fly to Delhi from Bombay at the earliest on the August 16th but preferably on August 17th.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, p. 225.

#### **45. Desire for Muslim League's Cooperation<sup>1</sup>**

As has been announced by the Viceroy, I have been invited by him, in my capacity as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government. In consultation with my colleagues, I have accepted this invitation.

It is our desire to have as representative a provisional national government as possible so that we may unitedly face the great problems that confront the country and lead India rapidly to full independence.

We would welcome the cooperation of the Muslim League in forming

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 13 August 1946. From *National Herald*, 14 August 1946.

a coalition government, and I am, therefore, writing to Mr. Jinnah on this subject.

**46. To M.A. Jinnah<sup>1</sup>**

August 13, 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

As you know, the Viceroy has invited me, in my capacity as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the immediate formation of the interim government. I have accepted the invitation. I feel that my first step should be to approach you and seek your cooperation in the formation of a coalition provisional government. It is naturally our desire to have as representative a government as possible. Should you wish to discuss this matter further with me, before coming to a decision, I shall gladly see you in Bombay or wherever you may be. I am leaving Wardha on August 14 and will reach Bombay in the forenoon of August 15. Probably I shall leave Bombay for Delhi on the morning of August 17.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 237-238.
2. Jinnah replied on 15 August 1946 that if the proposal meant that the Viceroy had commissioned Jawaharlal to form the Executive Council and he had already agreed to accept and act upon the Viceroy's advice it was not possible for him (Jinnah) to accept such a position on that basis. He added: "If you have to meet me on behalf of the Congress to settle the Hindu-Muslim question and resolve the serious deadlock, I shall be glad to see you today at 6 p.m."

**47. Telegram to the Prime Minister of Bengal<sup>1</sup>**

Wardha  
13.8.46

Have received trade union reports that Muslim League workers organizing labour strike sixteenth August and intimidating others to join. Sug-

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

gest your making clear that any strike purely voluntary and there must be no compulsion or intimidation.<sup>2</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. In fact, Suhrawardy had declared 16 August a public holiday, a dangerous step to take when communal passions were inflamed. He had said that "if the Congress were put into power, the result would be the declaration of complete independence by Bengal and the setting up of a parallel government."

#### 48. To M. A. Jinnah<sup>1</sup>

August 15, 1946

Dear Mr. Jinnah,

Thank you for your letter of today's date which was delivered to me at about 1 p.m.

Nothing has transpired between me and the Viceroy except what has already been published. There is no arrangement other than what is contained in his brief offer and our acceptance. That offer, made by the Viceroy with the concurrence of the British Government, is for us to make proposals for the immediate formation of an interim government. The Executive Council of the Governor-General has not been mentioned as such. It is understood, as stated in the published correspondence between the Congress President and the Viceroy, that the interim government will have the greatest possible freedom in the exercise of the day-to-day administration of this country.

Since this brief offer was made, and we accepted it, I have had no opportunity to meet the Viceroy, or discuss the matter with him more fully. I hope to do so within the next two or three days. It was our wish, however, that I might approach you first and invite your cooperation. We are naturally anxious to form a government which will be as representative as possible in order to deal with the urgent problems facing this country.

In your letter you state that you are unable to accept the position as it appears to you. I regret this. Perhaps, on fuller consideration of the position, you would be agreeable to reconsider your decision. If

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 237-238.

so, we would welcome it. For this purpose I shall gladly see you, if you so desire.

As regards the general Hindu-Muslim question, we are always prepared to discuss this and try to find a way out. Just at present we are immediately concerned with the formation of the provisional government, and circumstances demand that early steps should be taken in regard to it. We hope that a coalition provisional government will itself help in the reconsideration and solution of our problems. While I am willing to discuss the larger question with you, I have no new suggestions to make. Perhaps you may be able to suggest a new approach.

I am prepared to come to your place at 6 p.m. this evening, or if it is more convenient to you, some time tomorrow. I am leaving Bombay on the morning of August 17.

My letter to you was not sent to the press. I made a brief statement to the press, however, in view of repeated questions put to me by newspapermen, and in order to prevent misconceptions, if you so desire, you can release all this correspondence to the press.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Jinnah replied on the same day: "I have already made my position clear in my letter dated 15th August. But as you have given certain explanations, with some of which I must not be taken to agree, and as you desire to meet me, I shall be glad to see you today at 6 p.m."

#### 49. Muslim League's Refusal of Cooperation<sup>1</sup>

The Muslim League President, Mr Jinnah, has declined to offer his party's cooperation to the Congress in the formation of an immediate provisional national government.<sup>2</sup>

The Congress will go ahead with the formation of the provisional government, subject, of course, to other conditions being satisfactory after my interview with the Viceroy tomorrow.

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 16 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 17 August 1946.
2. Jawaharlal and Jinnah had a fruitless discussion in Bombay on 15 August 1946. After the meeting Jinnah said: "There will be no more meetings between me and Pandit Nehru."

I shall not go into all the details of the present position, but would frankly take the public into my confidence as far as events have progressed so far.

A few days ago, I received a communication from the Viceroy, when I was at Wardha, which stated that, in concurrence with the decision of the British Government, he proposed to ask me, as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the formation of an interim government. It is a fairly simple communication and there is nothing more or less than what I have stated. What that communication implies, it is for you to draw your own conclusions.

The Congress Working Committee decided to inform the Viceroy that I would be prepared to make proposals for the formation of the interim government. I had no other communication with the Viceroy in regard to this matter, apart from the one mentioned just now.

The position, today, is somewhat vague, though undoubtedly, the announcements made on behalf of the Viceroy and on our behalf do make a considerable advance. When I saw the Viceroy<sup>3</sup> last, at Delhi, there was no talk nor mention of this interim government. Some people imagine that there was some kind of secret understanding between the Congress and the Viceroy in regard to this matter, but I say there is nothing of the kind.

The present offer to the Congress to form the interim government does make a difference. The Viceroy has made a new kind of approach. There is a psychological difference. Unlike the previous occasions, we are now asked to form the entire government, no doubt with the cooperation of others, but taking the responsibility for it. Now it is not a question of individuals being picked and chosen by an external authority. May be, all this ends in our being caught in a trap, may be, that it leads us much further in the direction we want to go. We should eliminate all the obstructions in our way. But, in any case, we have to be very wary.

Meanwhile, the Working Committee thought it desirable that we should do our utmost to gain the cooperation of all, and, more especially the League, in forming the government.<sup>4</sup> There are obviously considerable differences in outlook, approach and objectives between the

3. See *arte*, item 36.

4. On 8 August 1946, the Congress Working Committee decided to accept the invitation to Jawaharlal to form the interim government. The Committee also appealed to the Muslim League to join in the task of constitution-making and reiterated that the Congress had accepted the British scheme "in its entirety" and had reserved all questions of interpretation to be decided according to the procedure laid down in the statement of 16 May 1946.



Congress and the Muslim League. It would have been rather futile to imagine that all those differences would suddenly vanish. Nevertheless, we did hope that, our differences apart, we might still be able to co-operate and, possibly, the process of cooperation might help in resolving those differences.

We had, as usual, a friendly talk. Mr. Jinnah put forward the Muslim League's case which everyone is well acquainted with. In brief, he criticised both the so-called long-term and short-term plans. Mr. Jinnah felt that the latest resolution of the Congress Working Committee did not differ much from the previous stand taken by the Congress. Perhaps he was right.

I regret that my meeting with Mr. Jinnah yesterday did not bring the Congress and the Muslim League politically nearer to one another. For the present, I can say nothing more except that I am going to Delhi tomorrow. I shall meet the Viceroy and we shall discuss the question of the formation of the interim government further. The fact that we have agreed to make proposals does obviously put certain responsibilities on us. It takes us many steps further. We have taken this decision with a full sense of the responsibility and not in any light-hearted manner because, obviously, all manner of consequences may follow.

I would like you to realise that there are possibly many hurdles still and not to imagine, as some do, that there is no further difficulty left about the formation of the provisional government. It may well be formed or there may still be some obstruction or difficulty.

Question : Will the interim government be a free government?

Jawaharlal Nehru : I make it clear that the Congress has accepted the Viceroy's offer to form the interim government which will not be merely the Executive Council, but a free government.

In a strict legal sense, there will be no change as regards the Viceroy's position, but, in practice, I trust, he will be a kind of constitutional head. If unfortunately the Viceroy exercised his veto, it would lead to trouble. In fact, it cannot be exercised. If he does, it would have major consequences.

Q : Will there arise a conflict between the interim government and the constituent assembly?

JN: The question of certification of any bill by the Viceroy will not arise inasmuch as there cannot be a conflict between the government and the assembly. I cannot conceive of such a conflict because any provisional government must carry the central assembly with it. If it does not, that government must go.

In fact the provisional government should function as though it is responsible to the Central Assembly, such as it is. It is obvious that the whole provisional government will be a different set-up, psychologically, and will approach both domestic and international problems from a different point of view. While so doing, it is conceivable that it may come into conflict with British authority in England or elsewhere. At present, one cannot say anything specific in regard to this matter.

Q : If the Congress formed the interim government without the Muslim League's cooperation and the League started some kind of direct action, would it not lead to the Congress being used to put down the League?

JN : If the League starts some kind of direct action, obviously the government will face that direct action—either come to terms with it or oppose it. There is no other course. If the government is strong, direct action goes under, but if the government is weak, the government will go under.

Q : What would be the attitude of the provisional government towards the Indian States?

JN : The States, as such, do not come within the scope of the provisional government except in regard to many common problems between the States and the rest of India. But obviously such a government, apart from the common problems, will be intensely interested in the formation of democratic governments in the States and it will try to further that end.

The decision of the Congress Working Committee to form the interim government was a vital decision and yet, perhaps, an inevitable decision in the sense that it follows a certain chain of happenings. From the Congress point of view, it was certainly a novel step. That step could not be taken normally without previous reference to the All India Congress Committee and in any event that reference will have to be made and the final decision will rest with that committee. At the same time, we felt that it would not be right for us to postpone action, in the light of happenings both in this country and abroad.

The Congress decision to agree to form the interim government involves many other consequences, internally, for the Congress. We have given some thought to this but we have not decided upon any definite line of action, since we are not sure whether the acceptance of the Viceroy's offer would lead to something final or not. I might tell you that, even now, we have not finally decided about the details of the proposals we have to make to the Viceroy. Since the Congress joining the provisional government is something entirely new, both for the

Congress and the country, we have to consider what relations our executive should bear to that government and whether any member of the executive could belong to that government. The Working Committee has come to certain conclusions in regard to these matters.

The Working Committee attaches the greatest importance to the internal organisation of the Congress, because it feels that whatever the future may hold for us, the real sanction behind us is the Congress organisation. Therefore, we do our utmost not only to keep it going, but to strengthen it, widen it, make it more disciplined and ready for action, when action may be necessary. Therefore, in considering all these governmental affairs, we have to think all the time of the effect of each such development on the Congress organisation and how we should adapt that organisation to these changing circumstances, so that it may not come into conflict, and yet, the most important thing of all, it should retain its revolutionary outlook. Obviously, some kind of change at the top by itself does not mean much. It may be the precursor of other changes, big and small. It is because we look upon the Viceroy's offer from that point of view that we thought in terms of accepting the Viceroy's offer to form the interim government. Big changes have to come later. The formation of the provisional government and the convening of the constituent assembly are by themselves only initial steps in a certain process. If we think that these steps lead in the right direction, then we take them. But if we think that they may come in our way we must avoid them. We have now come to the conclusion that these two steps, namely the convening of the constituent assembly and the formation of the interim government, will lead us and help us to proceed in the right direction, which will bring about fundamental changes in India. It is because of this that we have decided to go into the constituent assembly as well as, if other things are satisfactory, to form the provisional government.

Naturally when one takes such a step, one wishes for the largest measure of cooperation possible. In spite of all that had happened during the last three or four weeks—many statements, some of them violent and threatening violent action against the Congress—we felt it our duty to make an earnest effort to get that cooperation, not only from the Muslim League, but from others too. That cooperation is being offered to us by almost every group or community in India except, I regret, for the moment, the Muslim League. In the circumstances, however, it is obvious that we cannot stand still because of this unfortunate refusal of cooperation by the Muslim League. So far as we are concerned that door of cooperation will always be open. We shall, what-

ever we may do, always be keeping in view this larger viewpoint and proceed with the largest measure of cooperation.

The country-wide strikes signified a new kind of upheaval in India's economic life. There are other matters, too, which go to show that we must move swiftly or we may have to face greater disasters.

The sending of Indian troops to Iraq is ostensibly for the protection of oil interests there. It is of serious consequence from every point of view, from both international and Indian national points of view. All these developments are happening rapidly and may lead to a more critical crisis and the Congress has naturally to decide how to deal with the situation.

Considering all this, we have, for the present, come to the conclusion that it is desirable for us, subject to further clarification, to accept the Viceroy's offer and make proposals for the formation of the provisional government. We shall do that and what will happen subsequently, I do not know.

Q : Are you likely to go on a foreign visit?

JN: There is no possibility of my going anywhere outside India in the near future, in view of important developments in the country necessitating my presence here.

Q: Are you aware that the Government of India have not recognised the Indonesian Republic in their negotiations for obtaining rice for India?

JN: The present Government of India mean the British Government on the international plane. If they are to recognise the Indonesian Republic it means the British Government will have to break with the Dutch Government. With the incoming provisional government, it will be a different matter.

## 50. The Great Calcutta Killing<sup>1</sup>

I should not like to say much about the Calcutta disturbances<sup>2</sup> before full facts are available. But this is obvious that what has happened in

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 17 August 1946. *The Hindu*, 19 August 1946.
2. Riot, murder, arson and pillage began on the morning of 16 August and lasted until 20 August 1946. About 5,000 were killed and 15,000 injured. A statement issued by the Government of Bengal on 23 February 1947, six months after the occurrence, stated: "What was not foreseen and what took everybody by surprise including the participants was the intensity of the hatred let loose and the savagery with which both sides killed."

Calcutta can only take place when there is an organised effort to do so. The Provincial Government has no high reputation for competence or anything. Now one is inclined to doubt if it is any government at all. The kind of speeches which have been delivered by the Provincial Ministers in Bengal and Sind exhibit a sense of irresponsibility which is amazing. Obviously, such events as have taken place in Calcutta, deplorable as they are, do not make any major difference to the course of events. What they do is to degrade our public life completely. The future of India or that of any community is not going to be decided by gangster methods. Unfortunately, even a small number of persons can for a while upset the life of the city if proper precautions are not taken. I am sure that the vast majority of Hindus and Muslims in Calcutta must deplore what has happened and must have kept away from it.

## 51. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

I asked Nehru about his interview with Jinnah. He said he had had a long and quite amicable discussion but that it did not lead to any result. Jinnah began with a long review of the past negotiations, largely, I gather, on the lines of the letter<sup>2</sup> he wrote me, i.e. that he had been persuaded to accept on the basis of 5: 5: 2, and so on. Nehru said that whatever had happened in the past, it would surely be better for the Muslim League now to come in and cooperate both in the constituent assembly and in the interim government. I gather that Nehru offered him assurances about the conduct of the constituent assembly, that no major communal issue would be settled without a majority of both parties; that Congress would be prepared to refer any disputed points to the decision of the Federal Court; and that while Congress did not like the idea of grouping and preferred autonomous provinces under the Centre, they would not oppose grouping by provinces, if the provinces wished it. Jinnah's attitude appears to have been that nothing should be done for six months, till it was seen how matters developed.

Nehru made him an offer of five seats in an interim government of 14, on the same lines that I had proposed, and said that any names pro-

1. Delhi, 17 August 1946. File No. R/3/1/117, India Office Library and Records, London. This has not been printed in *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII.

2. On 8 June 1946, Jinnah wrote to Wavell: "...you were good enough to give me the assurance that there will be only 12 portfolios, five on behalf of the League, five Congress, one Sikh and one Christian or Anglo-Indian. ..."

posed by the League would be accepted by Congress. Jinnah asked how the minorities would be nominated; and Nehru said that as he had been asked to make proposals, he would naturally suggest names of minority representatives for the Viceroy's consideration. Jinnah then complained that under the proposed arrangement, it would be open to Congress to nominate a non-League Muslim. Nehru replied that he did not see how the League could object if it came out of the Congress quota. He said that Jinnah then embarked on a long historical review to show that all Muslims must belong to the League.

The discussion seems to have ended by Nehru saying that Congress would always welcome cooperation by the League in the government and constituent assembly, as soon as the League felt disposed to come in.

Nehru said that his impression was that Jinnah had gone rather farther than he had intended and was at a loss how to get out. He says that Jinnah is still in Bombay, and so far as he knows has no intention of coming to Delhi.

I then asked him what his proposals were about the formation of an interim government. He said that the idea was to propose to me the names of six Congress nominees and three minority representatives, and to fill the five Muslim seats with neutral Muslims. I suggested the possibility of leaving them open for a time for acceptance by the Muslim League, but he said that he did not like this idea, as it would give the government the appearance of instability.

I then asked him if he was prepared to submit names to me. He said at first that he could hardly do so until certain matters were settled. I asked him whether he meant the powers of the Government, because H.M.G. could not go any further than the undertaking to Azad.<sup>3</sup> He said that this was not the reason, but that they had not had time to discuss the matter fully, since his interview with Jinnah, and that he was not, therefore, ready with a complete proposal. There was also the difficulty that if he himself came in he could not remain President.

I asked him whether he could give me names provisionally, and he said he was prepared to do so on the understanding that they were not final. He said that after the meeting of the Working Committee at Wardha, they had formed a sub-committee to consider the formation of the interim government, which consisted of Vallabhbhai Patel, Azad and Rajendra

3. In his letter to Maulana Azad on 30 May 1946, Wavell dealt with the demand of the Congress that there must be a legal and constitutional change to give the interim government the status of a truly national government. Wavell stated that there could be no change in the constitution until a new one was formed but assured him of every possible help and freedom to the new government and promised to refrain from interference in the day-to-day administration.

Prasad; Patel and Prasad were already in Delhi, and Azad was expected to arrive this evening. He raised the point that if he gave me names, they would soon become public. I said that I hoped not and that in any event nothing could be final until the names were approved by the King.

He then gave me the following names: Vallabhbhai Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Nehru himself, Sarat Chandra Bose; but said that if he came in himself (which I think he intends to do), Rajendra Prasad would probably be elected the President instead of him, and he would have to submit a name in his place. I said that I thought Sarat Bose was not up to the calibre of the remainder; but he indicated that for certain reasons it was desirable to have him in.

The Congress scheduled caste representative would be Jagjivan Ram<sup>4</sup>.

The names of the minority representatives were: Baldev Singh, Matthai, and Bhabha.<sup>5</sup> The last named is a Parsee, apparently a bank manager in Bombay.

Nehru said that if the Muslim League were not coming in, Congress would prefer 15 members to 14, in which event he would like to add an Anglo-Indian: Anthony.

I then asked him about the Muslims. He gave me a list of about ten names, all of whom, except Asaf Ali, were unknown to me, and, I should judge, nonentities. He told me that he would have proposed Zakir Husain, but that he had sent a message asking that his name should not be submitted. Nehru's names were as follows (I am not sure that I have got the spelling of some of them right): Asaf Ali, Mohammed Yunus<sup>6</sup>, a lawyer from Bihar, Saiyadain<sup>7</sup>, a Shia, Education

4. (b. 1908); president, All India Depressed Classes League, 1936-46; imprisoned during freedom struggle, 1940-41 and 1942-43; Member for Labour, Interim Government, 1946-47; Union Minister for Labour, 1947-52, for Communications, 1952-56, for Railways, 1956-62, for Communications, 1962-63; resigned, 1963; Union Minister for Labour, 1966, for Food and Agriculture, 1967-70, for Defence, 1970-74, for Agriculture and Irrigation, 1974-77; resigned from Congress, 1977; Minister for Defence in Janata Government, 1977-79; Deputy Prime Minister, 1979.
5. C.H. Bhabha (b. 1910); lecturer, Sydenham College, Bombay, 1932-33; director of many business concerns before joining the Interim Government; Member for Commerce, September-October 1946, for Works, Mines and Power, November 1946, Union Minister for Commerce, 1947-48.
6. Leader of the Independent Muslim Party in Bihar; member, Bihar Provincial Assembly, 1937-39.
7. K.G. Saiyadain (1904-1971); Director of Education, Kashmir, 1938-45; Joint Educational Adviser, Government of India, 1950-54, Additional Secretary, 1954-56, Secretary, 1956-60; author of several books including *Principles of Education*, *Education for International Understanding*, and *Humanist Tradition in Indian Educational Thought*.

Minister in Rampur State, Fakhruddin Ahmed,<sup>8</sup> member of the Congress Working Committee, Ismail,<sup>9</sup> judge or ex-judge of the High Court of Allahabad, Mohammed Jan,<sup>10</sup> a Calcutta merchant, Prof. Habib of Aligarh University, Dr. Abdul Rauf<sup>11</sup> of Allahabad, formerly a Magistrate in Burma, Ali Zahcer, a Shia. He said that a representative of the Momins was desirable if possible but he had no name to suggest.

Generally, I got the impression that Nehru had given very little real thought to it and had just put down the names of any Muslims he knew who were not Leaguers.

I suggested that it might be very difficult for some of these men to accept, as they might be subjected to boycott or worse by the League; and that to put in a lot of rather unrepresentative Muslims might antagonise the League and prevent their coming in at all. I said I would think the matter over.

I then asked him whether he had considered the portfolios. He said not; they could be settled after the names were accepted. I said that the portfolio of the War Member was most important at this time, as it was absolutely essential to keep the army steady. Nehru agreed but said they had not considered who should be War Member. He said that during previous discussions I had mentioned the possibility of giving it to the Sikh representative. I asked whether he had considered some neutral person who would obviously be acceptable, such as the Nawab of Chhatari. He said that he was an honest gentleman with very good manners but had no ability at all. I found it a little difficult to refute this.

I then said that I would consider the names he had put forward for

8. Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed (1905-1977); Minister of Finance and Revenue, Assam, 1938-39; imprisoned during freedom struggle, 1940, 1942-45; Advocate-General, Assam, 1946-52; member, Rajya Sabha, 1954-57; Minister of Finance, Law and Community Development, Assam, 1957-66; Minister for Irrigation and Power, Government of India, 1966, for Education, 1966-67, for Industrial Development and Company Affairs, 1969-70, and for Food and Agriculture, 1970-74; President of India, 1974-77.
9. Mohammad Ismail (b. 1884); Judge, Allahabad High Court, 1937-44; Chief Justice, Eastern States High Court, 1944-47; High Commissioner for Pakistan in India, 1948-51; thereafter settled in India till his death.
10. Founder-secretary, All India Muslim Majlis, 1944; opposed Muslim League's demand for partition; member, Bengal Legislative Council, 1952-57 and 1962-67.
11. M.A. Rauf (1904-1964); representative of India in Burma, 1946-47; High Commissioner in Burma, 1947-48; ambassador to Burma, 1948-52 and to Japan, 1952-54; High Commissioner in Canada, 1954-58; ambassador to Belgium, 1958-61 and Switzerland, 1962.



the interim government, and would discuss the matter with him again as soon as possible. He asked how long I thought he would have to remain in Delhi, and I said that I wished to get the matter settled as soon as possible, and hoped that we could arrive at something within the next three days or so.

I then asked him what his views were about the summoning of the constituent assembly. He thought that it should be summoned for about the middle of September. He thought it desirable that the Sikhs should elect their representatives as soon as possible. I said that I had the matter under consideration.

He then asked what arrangement I had in mind for a temporary chairman of the constituent assembly until one could be elected. He said he thought that possibly for the oldest member to act might be a solution. I said that this had also occurred to me, but that it might be rather difficult to find out from several hundred members, an unchallengeable oldest member. He said that S. Sinha<sup>12</sup> of Patna, Vice-Chancellor of the University, who is 77, must surely be the oldest member. An alternative might be the senior High Court Judge who had been elected to the assembly. I said I would consider the matter.

I then asked what views he had about the U.N.O. delegation which had to be settled very shortly. He had not considered the matter, and did not seem to have any ideas. I asked him to think it over and let me know if he had any suggestions to make.

Finally, he asked me whether any effort had been made to get food from Russia, since he had heard that they had had a record harvest. I said that my impression was that Hoover<sup>13</sup> had tried and failed, and that we had asked the Combined Food Board and that they had said that there was no prospect of getting food from there.

The conversation lasted for an hour and a quarter. Nehru was very friendly and reasonable, but looked rather worn and tired. He told me that he was very much upset by his car having knocked down and killed a child a little while back.

12. Sachchidananda Sinha (1871-1950); president, Bihar P.C.C., 1916-20; Editor, *Hindustan Review*, 1901-21, and 1926-50; founded the newspaper *The Searchlight*, 1918; president, Bihar and Orissa Legislative Council, 1921-22; Vice-chancellor, Patna University, 1936-44; member, Constituent Assembly, 1946-50; presided over the inaugural session of the Constituent Assembly.
13. Herbert Hoover (1874-1964); President of the United States, 1929-33; at the request of President Truman Hoover undertook in 1946 the coordination of world food supplies of 28 countries.

## 52. To Stafford Cripps<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
18 August 1946

My dear Stafford,

I have delayed in writing to you although I received your brief note two or three weeks ago. Thank you for that letter. I have now received your two books *Democracy Alive* and *Towards Christian Democracy*. Looking at the various chapters in the books I see that there is much in them that will interest me greatly. I shall, therefore, read them with pleasure and profit.

I came to Delhi yesterday and saw the Viceroy. By the time you get this letter possibly some new developments might have taken place here. We have taken our recent steps with full deliberation and in the hope that they may lead to some real settlement. There may be some trouble in the country, but I don't think that need come in the way.

I hope your daughter is better now and that you will have also recuperated during your brief stay in Switzerland.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Collection.

## 53. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

The greater part of the interview was taken up with discussion about the possibility of making a further approach to Jinnah. I put forward the arguments, that it was just possible that Jinnah might feel more inclined to accept in view of the latest happenings; that a very grave responsibility would lie on us if we had not made every possible effort to secure his cooperation; and that Nehru himself had said that he thought Jinnah was looking for a way out. Nehru said that the events of the

1. Delhi, 18 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 253-254.

past 48 hours had made it even more difficult to approach Jinnah, that he saw no chance of his agreeing, that Congress would certainly not give up the nomination of a non-League Muslim, and that it would mean further delay. We discussed the matter for some time; and it was finally agreed that Nehru would consult the other members of the Committee in Delhi and would write me a letter tomorrow. I pressed him as strongly as possible but do not think I made much impression. I especially stressed the danger of the army breaking up.

Nehru said that they had discussed further the Muslim names; and I gathered that the list had been somewhat narrowed down. He told me that they had almost persuaded Azad to come in. The other four names he mentioned were Asaf Ali, Maula Bux of Sind,<sup>2</sup> Ali Zaheer, and Zaheer Uddin, the President of the Momin Conference. This sounds to me a really dreadful list, and I said I thought it would be very provocative to the Muslim League.

He said that the full name of the Parsee he had mentioned was Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha. I asked him why he had included a Parsee, as they were a comparatively small community. He said that he thought there generally had been a Parsee in the Executive Council, and that they were a progressive community.

I asked him whether he had a name instead of himself or Rajendra Prasad, if one of them was unable to become a Member by being President. He said that he was not yet prepared to submit a name.

He then said that he saw that J.P. Srivastava was going on a food delegation, and made a violent attack on him. I said I knew that Srivastava had made enemies, but that he had done very good work for India and had considerable qualities, and that I was not prepared to listen to vague allegations.

I then told him of the Foreign Secretary's telegram<sup>3</sup> about Mudaliar's<sup>4</sup> attendance at the Economic Council of U.N.O., and said that I proposed to pass the Foreign Secretary's telegram on to Mudaliar. He raised no objection, though he made some disparaging remarks about Mudaliar.

2. Brother of Allah Bux, Chief Minister of Sind, 1941-2, who was murdered in May 1943.
3. It was stated that the Foreign Secretary was disturbed to hear that Ramaswami Mudaliar was unable to attend the meeting of the U.N. Economic and Social Council beginning on 11 September 1946 and hoped that the Viceroy might still reverse the decision which might have been taken for political reasons.
4. A. Ramaswami Mudaliar (1887-1976); Member for Commerce, 1939-42, and for Supply, 1943-46 in the Viceroy's Executive Council; Dewan of Mysore, 1946-49; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-62; Vice-Chancellor, Kerala University, 1953-57; prominent after 1947 as chairman of several industrial concerns.

## 54. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
19 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

As suggested by you,<sup>2</sup> I have consulted my colleagues, and their reaction to your proposal is identical with mine.

When you wrote<sup>3</sup> to me that you had decided, with the concurrence of the British Government, to invite me, as President of the Congress, to make proposals for the formation of an interim government, we accepted this invitation on the understanding that the responsibility would be ours. We have since proceeded on that basis. I suggested to you that the best course would be to make this clear by a public announcement and you were good enough to agree to this, and an announcement was made. Immediately after this I approached Mr. M.A. Jinnah and sought the cooperation of the Muslim League. Mr. Jinnah was not willing to cooperate with us, as he made clear in his letters to me (which have been published) and subsequently in the course of our interview. We had then to proceed without him and the League. We have tried to get as good and representative a team as possible, and have already approached some persons on the new basis.

Your new proposal would change the whole approach to the problem and put an end to the responsibility which, at your suggestion, we had undertaken. We are now asked to revert to the previous stage which, we had thought, had finally ended after months of fruitless effort. It puts us in an embarrassing and unenviable position, and the difficulties inherent in the situation are likely to be considerably increased. In view of recent happenings, especially in Calcutta, such a step, far from leading to harmony, will be misconstrued and lead to a contrary result.

We feel, therefore, that we are quite unable to agree to your new proposal. We have come to Delhi for a specific purpose and on an urgent errand. If that purpose does not hold, then there appears to be no necessity for us to stay on here.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 258-259.

2. See the preceding item.

3. On 6 August 1946.

4. Wavell replied the same day agreeing that it would be no use sending for Jinnah in the existing circumstances.

**55. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
20 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

In consultation with my colleagues I am suggesting the names given below for membership of the interim government. We should very much like to have fifteen members of this government, both because we consider this number suitable and because this will enable us to include an Anglo-Indian representative. If the list is to contain fourteen names only then I am afraid there will be no room in it at present for an Anglo-Indian. We have not decided yet in regard to one Muslim name for the list. I hope to supply this later. I might add that we have secured the consent of all those mentioned in the list except one, Mr. Asaf Ali, whom we have not been able to contact. He has been in Kashmir and is on his way back. Apparently he has been held up somewhere owing to a stoppage of the air service. We hope to be in touch with him soon.

I have decided to join the provisional government myself. In addition to my name, therefore, there will be the following:

1. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel
2. Dr. Rajendra Prasad
3. Mr. M. Asaf Ali
4. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
5. Mr. Fazlul Huq
6. Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
7. Dr. John Matthai
8. Sardar Baldev Singh
9. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan
10. Mr. Jagjivan Ram (President, All India Depressed Classes League)
11. Syed Ali Zaheer (President, All India Shia Conference)
12. Mr. Cooverji Hormusji Bhabha
13. A Muslim name to be supplied later
14. Mr. Frank Anthony (President, Anglo-Indian Association)

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 269-270.

## 56. Reply to Jinnah's Charges<sup>1</sup>

In the course of a statement<sup>2</sup> to the press Mr. Jinnah has referred to my interview with him and to my subsequent press conference<sup>3</sup> in Bombay. I am reluctant to enter into any controversy and I would rather have not said anything further on this subject. But some misapprehension has arisen because of certain remarks made by Mr. Jinnah and I feel that I should say something to clear it. Mr. Jinnah is perfectly entitled to draw his inferences from what I may have said though I think some of his inferences are not justified. It is possible also that subsequent recollection of a long talk may not be strictly accurate even as to facts. The Congress position has been fully clarified in the Working Committee's recent resolution and I cannot add to it or vary it in any way. The brief correspondence that Mr. Jinnah and I exchanged with each other in Bombay soon after the Working Committee resolution is also there explaining both our respective positions. I would suggest to anyone interested to refer to the language of these documents for clarification if that is needed.

Mr. Jinnah says that I declined to discuss with him the long-term settlement. This statement has surprised me and I can only say that Mr. Jinnah's memory is at fault. I could not and would not decline to discuss anything with him. As a matter of fact I remember to have discussed the long-term settlement and the constituent assembly with him during our talk. This inevitably followed with reference to the Working Committee resolution.

As for the interim government being responsible to the Central Legislative Assembly, I stated that in effect it could not go against the wishes of that Assembly. I was asked a question in the press conference about

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 20 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 21 August 1946.
2. Jinnah stated on 18 August 1946: "Pandit Nehru declined to discuss the long-term settlement. He made it clear to me that they were invited by the Viceroy to make their proposals for the interim government and he thought that he would like to see me. The proposals which he made were that the Congress would form the cabinet and they were prepared to give five seats out of 14 to the Muslim Leaguers of their choice.... He considers that the swift limb of the Congress should not be shackled... why, does the swift limb want to make alliance with the British imperialism and depend upon British bayonets? Is it to enable them to crush the Muslim League?"
3. See *ante*, item 49.

certification. I replied that I could not imagine that such a contingency could arise because the Government would have to function in harmony with the Central Assembly.

I said nothing about crushing the Muslim League or anyone else. Our policy has not been and will not be to threaten or crush anyone but rather to win him over if we can. I was asked what would happen if there was direct action against the Government. I replied that wherever there is such direct action there can be only two results: either the success or partial success of that action which means the Government being swept away or coming to terms with it, or the direct action fails.

Mr. Jinnah refers to the use of British bayonets. May I repeat again what we have said frequently that we want the British armed forces to be removed from India as soon as possible. The sooner they go the happier we shall be, because we do not wish to think in terms of bayonets and certainly not in terms of British bayonets. I am sure that when British armed might is removed from India, it will be easier for all of us to face the realities in India and arrive at mutually advantageous agreements. Whatever conflict or discord there might unfortunately be today, it is certain that it will end some time or other and all the Indian people pull together to our destined goal of a free, independent and prosperous India.

## 57. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

I began by saying that our whole object must be directed towards an eventual coalition with the Muslim League, and that in considering the present proposals we must bear that in mind. For this reason I was averse to increasing the numbers to 15, though I recognised the advantage of having an Anglo-Indian representative.

I said that I could recommend to H.M.G. the six Congress names he had given me, viz: Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajagopalachari, Bose, Jagjivan Ram and Nehru himself. I asked whether he and Rajendra Prasad were still alternatives, i.e. that the President of Congress could not be a member, and that one of them might be unable to join. He said that this

1. Delhi, 22 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 281-284.

was not yet decided, and would depend on a meeting of the Congress Working Committee and the A.I.C.C., which might be held in a few weeks time. I rather gathered that the intention was that both should remain if possible.

I agreed to the three minority representatives: Baldev Singh, Matthai, and Bhabha, and asked whether I could assume that they had all accepted. He confirmed this, but said that Matthai had asked that he should not be called upon for a short time, as he was engaged in settling an industrial dispute at Tatas and wanted to complete this work.

We then turned to the Muslim representatives. I said that surely Fazlul Huq would let down the side badly with his reputation and instability; and that I advised Congress strongly not to include him. After a little discussion, Nehru agreed to withdraw his name.

I again suggested the possibility of leaving the Muslim seats vacant, but Nehru said the Congress were not willing to agree to this. I then said that I was prepared to recommend Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan, Sayed Ali Zaheer, and Asaf Ali. I gathered that the last named had accepted provisionally on the telephone, though I think from what Nehru said that he may have done so with some reluctance. The other two Muslim names were to be left over for the present. Azad had decided not to come in.

Nehru then pressed again for a council of 15 and the inclusion of Anthony as Anglo-Indian representative. I said I should be very reluctant indeed to increase the size of the council, since I thought it would increase the suspicions of the Muslim League and make their joining more difficult. Nehru said that he was quite willing for an announcement that the government would be cut down to 14, if necessary, when the League came in. I said at once that the words "if necessary" would not suffice to allay the suspicions of the Muslim League; and he said that they could be omitted if I wished. I asked whether it would not be possible to include Anthony in one of the vacant Muslim seats, but he said that he thought it was desirable that all five Muslim seats should be filled. I said I would consider the matter of the Anglo-Indian representative, but that I did not think I could agree to the increase of the council to 15.

I then asked whether he had considered the matter of portfolios. Obviously he had not. He said that he thought portfolios could be left until the government got together. I said that they were of very great importance, particularly that of the War Member, since it was essential to keep the army steady. He said that he thought that the Sikh Member might be appropriate. He himself would like to have



**External Affairs.** For Finance, the choice seemed to lie between Rajagopalachari and Matthai; and he seemed to prefer Matthai. I said that I thought it might be unfortunate to have a representative of Big Business like Tatas in the Finance Department, and that I should prefer Rajagopalachari. I did not think it worthwhile to discuss portfolios further, but asked him to have a talk with his colleagues about it. I pointed out that when the Muslim League came in they would have to have a fair share of the principal portfolios, and that it would be a pity to have to change over people from portfolios they had already held.

He then went back to the question of Anthony, and pointed out the advantages of having an Anglo-Indian representative, in view of their position in the Railways and Posts & Telegraphs, etc. I said that once we got him in and increased the council to 15 it would create a lot of feeling if we had to omit him on reconstruction. He said that it might be possible to omit instead some other Member; and said that there were, for instance, several important posts abroad which had to be filled. I agreed that there were several important posts, at Washington, in Ceylon, in Burma, and in London, which would require good men. He said that Ancy in Ceylon, whom I had mentioned as having served his time, was a good man but had been completely out of place in Ceylon.

I then went on to the question of the date of announcement, and said that I thought he should take into account the matter of the *Id* holiday on the 28th or 29th, and the danger of disturbances on that date if the composition of the interim government had been announced immediately before. He said he would consult his colleagues on this point and let me know; there might certainly be some danger in the announcement of a government before the *Id*, on the other hand there was also danger in the further delay. He asked me how soon after announcement the government would start functioning; I said as soon as possible; that my intention was that the government should be sworn in immediately and should start work at once. I said that all departments were prepared for their new Members, with a list of the most important and urgent cases. I told him that I proposed to make a broadcast when the announcement of the new government was made.

I spoke to him about Azad's suggestion<sup>2</sup> to me that I should get into indirect touch with Jinnah, and said that I could easily do so, but that I felt that I must mention it to him first of all. He said that Cong-

2. In his interview with Wavell on 19 August 1946, Maulana Azad had suggested that though it would not be advisable for Wavell to approach Jinnah direct, it might be possible by indirect contact to give Jinnah some reassurance and persuade him to join the interim government.

ress was always in touch with the League through mutual friends, and that he did not think an indirect approach by me would be suitable but that he would consult his colleagues. He said that they could have got several Muslim Leaguers to join the government, but that they had not wished to break up the League.

We then spoke of certain other matters outside the formation of the government. I said that I had taken advice on his suggestion that the oldest member should be temporary chairman of the constituent assembly, and that this seemed quite suitable and was the practice in France. I mentioned the Central Provinces resolution about the 1942 disturbances, which was being brought up on September 2nd, and said that I believed he had prevented such a resolution being pressed in the U.P. and should be grateful if he could do the same in the C.P. He said that he had written to the Premier of the C.P. at the same time as he wrote to the Premier of the U.P.

Nehru seemed reluctant to go, though we had completed business, and we had a general talk about methods of physical exercises in the morning, sport in India, and one or two other topics. He told me that Congress proposed to hold a full session in November, possibly in Meerut. He was quite friendly. We agreed to meet tomorrow, provisionally at 11 a.m., when he would tell me the views of his colleagues about the date of announcement and the distribution of portfolios, and I would tell him what my decision was about the proposal to include Anthony. After this he proposes to go away to Allahabad for a few days.

The discussion lasted just over an hour.

## 58. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> which I received this evening. I am sorry to learn of your decision, because I was anxious to have Frank Anthony

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 285-286.

2. Wavell stated: "I have no objection to Anthony's inclusion if in spite of including him you can keep the total number down to 14. I do however feel that the matter of paramount importance is to leave no stone unturned to get the Muslim League to join the Executive Council, and I am afraid therefore that we must limit the Council to 14."

in the interim government. I want the Anglo-Indians to be represented in it, but I do not see how this can be done now unless we have 15 members. I do not see why this number should come in the way subsequently of an arrangement with the Muslim League when we are prepared to make it clear that we shall then accept fourteen. It is quite usual for cabinets to be reformed from time to time.

We have been anxious to have a coalition with the Muslim League and we shall continue to work to that end. But I want to make it clear that our idea of a coalition does not mean a submission to the demands or peculiar ways which the League has adopted. A coalition can only come into existence on the clear understanding that the League can nominate its five representatives and not interfere in any way with our choice of our representatives, including a Nationalist Muslim. When the League accepts this, then a coalition will come into the picture.

I do not know what your conception is of the proposed provisional government. Is it going to be just another kind of Caretaker Government waiting and hoping for the Muslim League to walk in when it feels inclined to do so? That would simply mean an ineffective unstable government which cannot undertake anything worthwhile and which exists more or less on sufferance. That surely will not be the way to tackle any of the urgent problems that face our country, and certainly not the communal problem. That might well lead to a worsening of the situation and possibly even to a repetition of the horror of Calcutta. It is not for this that we would care to join the provisional government.

The country needs a strong, virile, active and stable government which knows its mind and has the courage to go ahead, not a weak, disjointed, apologetic government which can be easily bullied or frightened and which dare not take any step for fear of possible consequences. To give an impression to the country and our people that we are merely a casual and temporary government waiting for the favour of the Muslim League is to undermine the prestige and authority of the government. That way will not even lead to the coalition we hope for. It will lead to renewed attempts to bully and coerce, which again produce like reactions on the other side, as we have seen in Calcutta. The only proper approach is to make clear that while we shall always welcome cooperation, we propose to carry on firmly even if this is denied.

Calcutta has been a terrible shock to you and to all of us. And yet may I say that it has a personal significance for us which it cannot have even for you? Our friends and relatives are involved in these bloody murders, and our children and dear ones may have to face the assassin's knife at any time. It is this grim reality that we face. We shall face it, of course, without shouting, but we are not going to shake hands

with murder or allow it to determine the country's policy. We shall still continue to reason with Hindu and Muslim and Sikh and others and try to win them over to the path of friendly cooperation, for there is no other way for the advancement of India. But we do not believe that cooperation will come out of appeasement of wrong-doing. Hence my dislike of approaches, direct or indirect, which have an appearance of this type of appeasement and are always likely to be misunderstood. The time will surely come when all of us, or most of us, will cooperate together. It will be retarded by wrong tactics and approaches. We must have a strong and stable ship if we are to face it with confidence.

I have written this personal letter to you soon after receiving your letter. We may have much to do with each other in the future and you should know how I feel about the present situation.

I intend going to Allahabad day after tomorrow, Saturday morning, by air. I shall return for the meeting of our Working Committee on the 27 August.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 59. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have consulted my colleagues about the date of announcement. We feel that any delay will be inadvisable. As it is, all manner of rumours are spreading and newspapers are even publishing lists of names of the interim government. This kind of thing keeps up a certain excitement and is more likely to lead to trouble than a formal announcement which brings definiteness. We would, therefore, prefer as early an announcement of the interim government as possible and we would like to impress upon you the advisability of doing so.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, p. 287.

**60. An Emergency Meeting of the Congress Working Committee<sup>1</sup>**

An emergency meeting of the Congress Working Committee will be held in Delhi on the 27th August to consider the developments in the political situation, the recent happenings in Calcutta and the convening of a meeting of the All India Congress Committee. In view of short notice members may not get separate information and are requested to treat this as sufficient notice. All the invitees to the Working Committee on the last occasion are again invited to attend the next meeting to be held in Delhi on the 27th.

1. Statement to the press, 22 August 1946 *The Hindustan Times*, 23 August 1946.

**61. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>**

I began by referring to Nehru's letter<sup>2</sup> of the 22nd; I said that I had decided that the numbers of the government must be restricted to 14, so that a place could not be found for Anthony, but I suggested that he might perhaps be found a place as under-secretary in some department, as I thought that some of the heavily worked departments might need parliamentary under-secretaries.

I said that I agreed with him that a resolute and decisive government was required which would go ahead. Law and order must certainly be kept, but the policy towards the Muslims must not be provocative. I would certainly not be a party to any attempt to break up the Muslim League by force. I said that I was quite convinced that without the cooperation of the Muslim League there would be no chance of a united India or of a peaceful transfer of power. Nor would the States be likely to negotiate freely with a one-party government.

1. Delhi, 23 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 290-292.
2. See *ante*, item 58.

Nehru made little comment on this and appeared to accept it.

We then agreed that the names of the new government should be announced tomorrow (Saturday); and I told Nehru that I proposed to broadcast on Saturday evening.<sup>3</sup> I showed him the rough draft of my broadcast, he read it and said that he had no comments to make.

Nehru agreed on September 2nd as a suitable date for the new government to be sworn in, and that this date should be announced tomorrow.

He then asked me a number of questions about the working of council, especially as regards planning. He laid down some rather obvious foundations for planning as a whole, and talked about the scientific rather than the bureaucratic approach. I explained as far as possible the machinery for planning, and said that it was naturally most desirable that all development should be on an ordered plan; but that in actual practice it was difficult to carry out everything exactly according to programme, especially with so much to be done.

We had a little talk about portfolios, but he obviously was not prepared for any final discussion. I suggested that Rajagopalachari would be the best Member for Finance, especially as he was accustomed to work with Sir C. Jones,<sup>4</sup> the Secretary. I suggested that Matthai might be valuable in Works, Mines and Power, where there were so many important electro-hydro schemes. I also suggested that Bhabha would be a suitable Commerce Member, and that Rajendra Prasad or Patel might take the Home portfolio. Nehru noted these suggestions but made no comment.

I then spoke about representation at the U.N.O. Assembly meeting. He said he had thought of Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, but was doubtful whether her health would permit her to go. I also mentioned the meeting of the Asiatic section of the I.L.O., due to be held at Delhi in January, and the difficulties that might arise about accommodation.

We also spoke of one or two other matters, the date of the next meeting of the Legislative Assembly, for which I said we had in mind November the 11th, &c.

He asked me when the constituent assembly would meet. I said that he had suggested the middle of September, but would he like to

3. On 24 August 1946, a communique announcing the establishment of the interim government was published. The same day Wavell in a broadcast welcomed its formation and reaffirmed the invitation to the Muslim League to take the seats allotted to it.
4. Cyril Jones; Finance Secretary to Government of India, 1939-47. He was a Secretary in the Madras Government when Rajagopalachari was Prime Minister of the Madras Province during 1937-39.

wait till the government was formed before finally deciding? He seemed to agree to this. I asked him what he had in mind as the programme for the constituent assembly if the Muslim League did not attend. He seemed to think that they would draw up a model constitution for a province, but agreed that it would not be possible for the constituent assembly to lay down any constitution for a Muslim province without the Muslims.

He is going away tomorrow, and will be back on Monday evening, the 26th. There will be a meeting of the Working Committee on the 27th. I told him that I was going to Calcutta on Sunday and would be back on the evening of Monday the 26th.

He was friendly, but seemed rather quiet and depressed.

## 62. To Tej Bahadur Sapru<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
25-8-1946

My dear Tejbahadurji,

Thank you for your affectionate letter<sup>2</sup> which has moved me greatly and made me think of old times. I have had the good fortune to have the affection and good wishes of many persons, but your affection and good opinion mean much to me and I have treasured them.

I know we are going to have rough weather. But do not worry at all about me. I am tough myself and I know how to look after myself. I shall certainly do so.

I have just been speaking on the long distance telephone to Shafaat Ahmad Khan's wife at Simla. He has been badly wounded but is out of danger.<sup>3</sup>

I shall try to visit you about 3 p.m. tomorrow on my way to the aerodrome.

Thank you again,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. Tej Bahadur Sapru Correspondence (microfilm), N.M.M.L.
2. Sapru congratulated Jawaharlal on the eve of his forming the provisional government. "I also congratulate you in your personal capacity as the one man who has deserved this by reason of his unbending character, unsurpassed patriotism and unrivalled gifts."
3. Shafaat Ahmed Khan, a member-designate of the interim government, was stabbed in Simla on 25 August 1946. As a protest against the reversal of the policy of the Muslim League, he had resigned from the League a month earlier.

**63. To C.J. Pao<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

My dear Mr. Pao<sup>2</sup>,

I hope you will forgive me for the delay in answering your letter of June 21st. It was very good of you to write to me and to enquire about the report of injury to me. As a matter of fact I was not actually wounded.

As you will no doubt learn, changes are taking place in the Government of India and we shall have to face great responsibilities in the future. As in China, we have tremendous problems to face but we hope to do so successfully though we shall have many difficulties.

Please convey my regards to Madame Pao.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. Had been Chinese Consul General in India.

**64. To A.J. Anbian<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

Dear Prof. Anbian<sup>2</sup>,

I have your letter of 17th August. I am afraid it is impossible to build up a united India if each group and community desires separate representation. Our purpose is to put an end to all such separate representation as exists and not to add to it. The work before us is so vast that it offers opportunities for every patriotic Indian to take part in it.

I shall gladly meet you but I cannot fix a time or day as my programme remains uncertain.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. President of the All India Kashatriya Nadar Association, Arumuganeri, Tirunelveli district.



**65. To Jiwan Das Rai<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

Dear Mr. Jiwan Das Rai<sup>2</sup>,

I have received your letter of the 5th August and I read it with interest. I am aware that there are large numbers of Nepalese in India outside Nepal and that many of them have taken part in our national movement. So far as I am concerned there is no reason why the Nepalese should be treated as other than Indian with all the privileges of Indian citizenship. But it is obviously not possible to give them separate representation in various assemblies. We want to put an end to all separate representation and not to add to it.

Another question bound to arise in the future will be the exact status of the Nepalese in India. If they accept Indian citizenship with all its privileges and obligations then there is no difficulty. Otherwise certain difficulties will certainly arise. The question will have to be decided by them and will also depend of course on the relationship between Nepal and the Government of India.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.I..
2. Secretary, India Domiciled Nepalese Congress, Kalimpong.

**66. Wavell's Record of Interview with Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>**

I said that I had asked them to come and see me because I had just returned from Calcutta. I gave a description of what I had seen in Calcutta; and said that the only way to avoid similar trouble all over India on an even larger scale was by some lessening of communal tension and settlement between Hindu and Muslim. I stressed the importance of

1. Delhi, 27 August 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 312-313.

coalition governments, both in Bengal and at the Centre.

I said that while I recognised the difficulty in reopening negotiations with the Muslim League, I felt sure that the country expected it as a result of what had happened in Calcutta. The crux of the whole matter lay in the doubt about the Congress interpretation of the grouping in the constituent assembly. I said that I thought I had been quite clear in my mind that Congress had now agreed to abide by the statement of May the 16th, and to me this had meant the acceptance of the grouping arrangements. When I made my broadcast a few nights ago, the draft of which I had shown to Nehru, I had been quite convinced that this was the intention and that it was on this understanding that I had said what I did in my broadcast. I said that I thought the only chance of a peaceful transfer of power in India was if the Congress made a categorical statement that they would accept the position that the provinces must remain in their sections, as intended by the Mission, until after the first elections under the new constitution. I said that I could not undertake the responsibility of calling together the constituent assembly until this point was settled. I handed to Gandhi and Nehru the draft of a statement which I asked them to make, as follows:

“The Congress are prepared in the interests of communal harmony to accept the intention of the statement of May 16th that provinces cannot exercise any option affecting their membership of the Section or of the Groups if formed until the decision contemplated in paragraph 19(viii) of the statement of the 16th May is taken by the new legislature after the new constitutional arrangements have come into operation and the first general elections have been held”.

Gandhi began by saying that he thought it was a matter for the interim government. I said that it was a matter for Congress who had challenged the interpretation of the Mission. He then went off into long legalistic arguments about the interpretation of the Mission's statement. I said that I was a plain man and not a lawyer, and that I knew perfectly well what the Mission meant, and that the compulsory grouping was the whole crux of the plan.

The argument went on for some time, and we did not make much progress. Nehru at one time got very heated and said that this was simply “bullying” by the Muslim League. Gandhi said that if a blood-bath was necessary, it would come about in spite of non-violence. I said that I was very shocked to hear such words from him. In the end they took away the formula, but I do not think there is much hope of their accepting it.

The interview lasted about forty minutes.<sup>2</sup>

2. Immediately after this interview Mahatma Gandhi wrote to Wavell to say that Wavell's language and manner had been minatory, he could not afford to ignore "the law" and suggested that he should be assisted by a legal mind if necessary. If his intentions were really those expressed in the interview he should not have asked the Congress to form the interim government. The Congress could not adopt a wrong course because of the brutality in Bengal. He asked that his letter be sent to the British Cabinet.

## 67. The Terrible Lesson of the Calcutta Killing<sup>1</sup>

Calcutta has been a terrible lesson and the horror and fearful tragedy of the killing and inhuman atrocities there have shaken up all of us.

The new development of violence, involving stabbing, arson and looting, chiefly in cities, obviously cannot be tolerated, or else all organised life would become impossible. This has ceased to be merely communal or political. It is a challenge to every decent instinct of humanity and it should be treated as such.

The most effective method to check these degrading conflicts is the organisation of average citizens for the protection of their *mohallas* and not the peace committees usually formed during communal riots of the very elements that have caused the trouble.

What has led up to this — the incitement to violence, the direct invitations to the shedding of blood is worthy of inquiry so that effective action may be taken. For the present, we are concerned with the immediate steps to be taken.

It is well to remember, however, that during the past 26 years of repeated conflict on an intensive and mass scale between the nationalist movement and the British power in India, nothing of this kind has happened. A very few regrettable incidents have occurred, but in spite of high passion and deep feeling, our movement has been carried on at a high level of peaceful and decent behaviour, even towards our opponents. It is well to compare this with recent events.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 26 August 1946. *National Herald*, 27 August 1946.

In the present then, what are we to do? The responsibility for maintaining peace and order must necessarily fall on the Government and its police forces. But every citizen has also a certain responsibility and in a crisis like this it is an obligation for every citizen to discharge this responsibility. For the conflict is between ordinary decency and bestial behaviour.

When such conflicts occur, there is always danger of even decent persons being swept away by passions, and sinking to low levels. We cannot permit this, or else there would be no hope for India. Inevitably when one is attacked there has to be self-defence and organised defence by the police as well as by the people. Anti-social and gangster elements can never be allowed to dominate a situation. This requires cooperation between the people and the police and a spirit of accommodation between them so that such anti-social elements might be isolated and dealt with adequately.

It has been the usual practice when a communal riot occurs for a peace committee to be formed, consisting often of some of the very elements that have caused the trouble. Such peace committees may be useful but their utility is not enhanced by the presence of these elements. Trouble makers do not easily transform themselves into messengers of peace and goodwill. It is more necessary for the average citizens to organise themselves so as to prevent trouble or nip it in the bud as soon as it begins.

No resident of a *mohalla* or ward wants trouble at home. The residents of each *mohalla* should, therefore, organise themselves for self-protection, that is for the protection of that *mohalla*. Their primary concern should be to look after that particular area and the people who live there. Being neighbours, they know each other and can rely on each other. If trouble arises in some other part of the city, the people should stick to their *mohalla* and keep it immune from it. If all or most of the *mohallas* are so organised no trouble can spread and even if it occurs somewhere, it can easily be isolated and ended.

Such *mohalla* self-protection committees should be open to all the residents of the *mohalla*, without any question of religion or party or profession. No formal organisation is necessary either in the *mohalla* or the city. The more informal all this is, the better. With further experience the idea can be developed. Any such attempt at organising self-protection in small areas should lead to self-reliance and cooperation between the people living there. It should be based also on cooperation with the police and the authorities who have a very difficult task in these critical times. Just as the *mohalla* is organised for self-defence so also villages can be organised.

**68. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
28 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I have received your letter of today's date suggesting that I might consult the Working Committee about the proposal that you made to Mr. Gandhi and me yesterday evening. As a matter of fact I placed this proposal before our Committee this afternoon. They were considerably surprised that this should be made, more especially at the present moment when we are supposed to be on the eve of the provisional government. There appeared to be a rather sudden change in your approach to the question.

We have repeatedly made our position clear in regard to the constituent assembly and the question of grouping. I would like you to refer to the resolution we passed at our Wardha meeting about two weeks ago. In this resolution it was stated that they accepted the scheme contained in the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16th in its entirety. "They interpreted it so as to resolve the inconsistencies contained in it and fill the omissions in accordance with the principles laid down in that statement. They hold that provincial autonomy is a basic provision and each province has the right to decide whether to form or join a group or not". But, they further added, that "questions of interpretation will be decided by the procedure laid down in the statement itself, and the Congress will advise its representatives in the constituent assembly to function accordingly". This resolution, so far as I know, was not misunderstood by any one, and even in your broadcast of August 24th it was correctly interpreted.

In our public statements and in our private talks with you we made it clear that any dispute as to the interpretations of the clauses relating to grouping might be referred to the Federal Court and we would abide by its decision. I can imagine nothing fairer than this and it does away with the fear of a majority overriding a minority in a matter of interpretation to which so much importance has been attached.

In your broadcast on August 24th you refer to the constituent assembly and the question of grouping as follows: "It is desirable also that the work of the constituent assembly should begin as early as possible. I can assure the Muslim League that the procedure laid down in the statement of May 16th regarding the framing of provincial and group

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 326-327.

constitutions will be faithfully adhered to; that there can be no question of any change in the fundamental principles proposed for the constituent assembly in paragraph 15 of the Cabinet Mission's statement of 16th May or of a decision on a main communal issue, without a majority of both major communities; and that the Congress are ready to agree that any dispute of interpretation may be referred to the Federal Court".

Thus what you said in your broadcast in this respect was in conformity with what we have ourselves said. What you now suggest is at variance with both and means that there should be no reference to the Federal Court of this particular matter, and that we should accept the interpretation put upon it by the Cabinet Mission and you as distinguished from the legal interpretation which may be put upon it by the Federal Court. You stressed this and the need for communal harmony presumably because of what has happened in Calcutta. This approach is new. The Calcutta occurrences had taken place before your broadcast in which you have referred to the Federal Court deciding questions of interpretation.

All of us are extremely anxious to do everything in our power to promote communal harmony, but the way you suggest seems to us to lead to a contrary result. To change our declared policy, which is generally acknowledged to be fair, because of intimidation is surely not the way to peace but is an encouragement of further intimidation and violence. We are therefore unable to accept your proposal.

I should like to add that we have been considerably perturbed at this new approach and its implications. If we are to form the provisional government, we must necessarily shoulder great responsibilities for the peace and progress of our people. No government can function if it is treated as if responsibility lay elsewhere and it had to submit in vital matters to proposals with which it was in disagreement.

Your reference to the non-summoning of the constituent assembly, unless the course suggested by you was adopted by us, seemed to us extraordinary and this produced a feeling of resentment in my colleagues. If this is your view and is going to be acted upon by you then the whole structure built up during recent months falls to the ground. We are clearly of opinion that it is both a legal and moral obligation now to go on with the constituent assembly. It has already been elected and though it has not met, it exists already and must start functioning at an early date. It cannot be held up because some people do not choose to join it and disturbances take place in the country. We agree that it would be desirable for all concerned to join it and we shall make

every effort to win the cooperation of others. But if they refuse to join, then the constituent assembly must proceed without them.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Wavell replied on 29 August 1946 that the problem of grouping was a practical and not a legal one. Even if the Federal Court accepted the Congress interpretation, the Muslim League would remain alienated. It was unwise to convene the constituent assembly until an agreement on grouping had been reached.

## 69. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
29 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Thank you for your letter of today. I agree with you that the problem is not merely a legal one but a practical one. We have considered it in all its practical aspects. These aspects include all manner of considerations other than our own views on the subject. For instance it is obvious that any change made at the present stage would seriously affect the Sikh position. It would be very unfair of us to go back on the assurances<sup>2</sup> we have given to them on this matter. As it is, you know that they are not at all satisfied with things as they are. If a further change to their disadvantage is made, it would produce great resentment amongst them as well as amongst others. The Congress has tried its best to keep in view the interests of the various minorities in the country. If the Congress acted up to your present suggestion many minorities would feel that we were ready to betray them and their interests because of pressure from some source. That would be an unfortunate position for all of us. Any change also would produce a feeling of uncertainty and lack of finality in the picture and if any change has to be made it should be through a recognised process, such as the

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 338-339.

2. See *ante*, item 40.

one referred to by us, and not casually and over the heads of many people concerned.

I have referred above to various consequences that might follow from an attempt at change. I am not again going into the merits of the question though these are, of course, of importance. I would also remind you that the matter has been considered in all its aspects by the All India Congress Committee which has issued its directions to us in the resolution it has passed. As a subordinate body we cannot go against the spirit and letter of the resolution.

If the point at issue was referred to the Federal Court, I do not know what its decision would be. For our part we have agreed to abide by it even if it goes against us. It is premature to say what the Muslim League would do then. That would depend not only on the decision itself but on many other factors.

As regards the constituent assembly, I feel sure that an indefinite postponement of it would not only be wrong in principle but would have harmful practical results even from the point of view of our gaining the cooperation of the Muslim League which we desire. As I said in my letter of yesterday, the initial processes relating to the constituent assembly having been started, it would be a grave step to impede them in any way. That might well lead to unfortunate consequences.

We have asked our colleagues, who are going to be members of the provisional government, to reach Delhi on the 31st of this month to discuss with us the distribution of portfolios. I suggest that I might meet you after that, preferably on the 1st afternoon. Tomorrow the Congress Working Committee will be meeting both in the morning and in the afternoon.

I understand that Mr. Rajagopalachari is unable to come here for some time because of ill-health. Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan has been, as you know, badly injured by murderous attacks on him. I am glad to say that he is progressing well, but I am not sure when he will be able to come to Delhi. Sardar Baldev Singh is rather tied up with his Punjab Ministry work and wants to keep away for a few days in September till the Punjab Premier returns. Dr. John Matthai has also intimated to me that he would like to take charge in the second week of September or thereabout owing to important work to which he has long been committed. I trust all this will not matter and some arrangements





ADDRESSING A PRESS CONFERENCE, BOMBAY, JULY 1946



AFTER TAKING OFFICE AS MEMBERS OF THE INTERIM GOVERNMENT, DELHI,  
2 SEPTEMBER 1946

could be made for the intervening period which is not likely to exceed a week or so.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Pethick-Lawrence attached greater importance than Wavell to retaining the cooperation of the Congress and allowing Jawaharlal to take over the interim government. So Wavell was advised that he should not take any steps which were likely to result in a breach with the Congress. The interim government, the formation of which had already been publicly announced, should take office at once. It was necessary to play for time in order that the effect of responsibility might make its impressions on the members of the interim government. The Congress could be persuaded to agree to a postponement of the summoning of the constituent assembly until October 1946.

#### 70. To C. Rajagopalachari<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
30 August 1946

My dear Rajaji,  
The Viceroy's Secretary informed me yesterday about your message to him. I am sorry about your illness but, as I have informed the Viceroy, there should be no difficulty about your coming here a week or so later when you are in a position to do so. It is better to take charge here than by telegram.

There is one matter to which I should like to draw your attention. As this government is being formed on a cabinet basis and the Viceroy has asked me as Congress President to undertake this business of forming a government, it is desirable that we should act as a group and not individually, that is to say that dealings with the Viceroy should be through me and not directly. The Viceroy has, in fact, referred every matter to me.

Please look after your health and don't leave the hospital till you are well enough to do so. Meanwhile some temporary arrangements will be made for the intervening period.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

**71. To G.E.B. Abell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
30 August 1946

Dear Mr. Abell,<sup>2</sup>

Your letter of the 29th August has just reached me. I should imagine that it was much better for Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan to take charge on his arrival here on or about the 8th September. That applies to Mr. Rajagopalachari also. There appears to be no particular advantage in taking over charge by telegram. As for Sardar Baldev Singh, the difficulty is not due to his illness or inability to come but his desire not to take over charge till the Punjab premier has returned from Europe. It is only then that he will give up his Punjab ministership and can come here immediately.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (b 1904); joined I.C.S., 1928; Private Secretary to Viceroy, 1945-47.

**72. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
1 September 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

I enclose a list<sup>2</sup> indicating how portfolios should be allotted to the members of the provisional government. This list has been prepared in consultation with our colleagues, except two who were not present owing to illness. As I have stated in the note attached to the list, this allotment should be considered provisional and we might suggest changes after we have had some experience of the working of the various departments.

For the next week or so some of our colleagues will be absent and temporary arrangements have to be made for this period. I suggest

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*. Vol VIII, pp. 380-381.
2. See the following item.

that I might take formal charge of these portfolios for this week or ten days.

As we have made it clear, we shall welcome the cooperation of the Muslim League in the provisional government. If they so choose they can nominate five members of the government. When they decide to do so five of our members will retire in their favour, and a reshuffling of the portfolios will take place so as to give them an equitable share of them.

As you know the new government, though formed within the terms of the existing law, is in nature and formation different from its predecessors. This difference has been noted and emphasised by observers in India, England and elsewhere and it has been referred to by most people as the interim government. We would prefer to call it the provisional national government, but if you think that interim government is more suitable at present we have no objection. But in any event it would be undesirable to refer to it as the Governor General's Executive Council. In any official announcements or references to be made to it, it should be called either the provisional government or the interim government. You have yourself referred to it as such and in the intimation conveyed to us of the King's approval of our appointment it is stated that we are members of the interim government.

This government will function as a cabinet and will be jointly responsible for its decisions.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 73. Portfolios of the Members of the Interim Government<sup>1</sup>

- |   |                          |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. External Affairs and<br>Commonwealth Affairs   | Jawaharlal Nehru         |
| 2. Defence (or War)                               | Sardar Baldev Singh      |
| 3. Home including Information<br>and Broadcasting | Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel |

1. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 381-382.

4. Finance		Dr. John Matthai
5. Communications (War Transport and Railways)		Mr. M. Asaf Ali
6. Agriculture and Food		Dr. Rajendra Prasad
7. Labour		Mr. Jagjivan Ram
8. Health	}	Dr. Shafaat Ahmad Khan
9. Education and Arts		
10. Legislative	}	Syed Ali Zaheer
11. Posts and Air		
12. Industries and Supplies		Mr. C. Rajagopalachari
13. Works, Mines and Power		Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose
14. Commerce		Mr. C. H. Bhabha

*Note:* The above arrangement is to be considered provisional and after some experience there may be a reshuffling of portfolios and a rearrangement of subjects under each portfolio.

As at present there are only twelve members available out of a total of fourteen, some portfolios have been temporarily grouped together. As soon as the two additional members are appointed, these portfolios may be separated or such other arrangements made as are considered suitable.

It has not been possible to consult Mr. C. Rajagopalachari and Sir Shafaat Ahmad Khan about the allotment of portfolios but, so far as our information goes, the suggestions made will be agreeable to them. A suggestion was made that Mr. Rajagopalachari might take Finance and Dr. John Matthai should take Industries and Supplies. The choice might be made by those two themselves. We are informed, however, that Mr. Rajagopalachari is very much averse to taking charge of Finance, and so the arrangement given in the list above should stand.

Some of the members namely Messrs. Rajagopalachari, John Matthai, Sardar Baldev Singh, Shafaat Ahmad Khan and C. H. Bhabha, are unable to take charge owing to ill-health or other reasons for a week or so. Some temporary arrangements have to be made for these portfolios for this week or ten days, as the case may be.

Jawaharlal Nehru

## 74. Wavell's Record of Interview with Jawaharlal<sup>1</sup>

Nehru handed me a letter<sup>2</sup> containing the list of portfolios; and I agreed that they were acceptable. I asked why Matthai had been preferred to Rajagopalachari for the Finance portfolio, and he said that Rajagopalachari had telephoned to say that he would rather not take the Finance portfolio.

I said that the Government should be known as the interim government, not the provisional national government.

We agreed that the portfolio of the War Member should be known as the Defence portfolio, provided there was no legal difficulty.

The matter of Members holding directorships came up, and Nehru said that any Members of his who were directors were busy divesting themselves of them. He himself held the directorship of a newspaper, and asked whether that came under the ban. I said that I imagined that it did.

I told Nehru that I should have to appoint a Vice-president to act when I was absent. I gathered he would expect to be nominated himself. He also intended, apparently, to act as leader in the Assembly. He raised the point whether those who were already elected members of the assembly (Asaf Ali and Sarat Bose) would have to resign and be nominated. I said that this point had been raised before by Mr. Jinnah, and I understood that it would be necessary. He said that he believed it could be done without an amendment of the 1935 Act by passing a resolution in the Assembly. I said I would look into the matter.

He raised the question of empty portfolios : Defence, Finance, Health, Industries & Supplies, and Commerce. I said that the normal convention was for the Governor General to make himself responsible for empty portfolios for a short period; and I thought that it would be better to follow this in the present instance.

I then mentioned the matter of interviews with Members, and told him that I intended to discontinue the practice of Secretaries having access to the Viceroy, but that I wished to continue seeing all Members at regular intervals. He agreed.

He then raised the question of arrangements for tomorrow, and I told him what was proposed. This seemed all satisfactory.

1. Delhi, 1 September 1946. *The Transfer of Power 1942-7*, Vol. VIII, pp. 382-384.

2. See the preceding two items.

He mentioned some International Trade Conference in October, in London, and asked whether it could not be postponed. I said I had not got this one in my head.

He then spoke about the U.N.O. conference, and said that if the idea that he was not *persona grata* to Congress was standing in the way of Mudaliar going to the conference, would I let him know that the Congress would be quite agreeable for him to go, in fact Nehru seemed to be anxious that he should. I said that I thought it was his duties in Mysore that were the obstacle, but that I would consider sending a message to Mudaliar in the sense he had given me.

He then suggested that K.P.S. Menon<sup>3</sup> should go to the conference as an Adviser instead of returning to China. I asked whether he had any idea of going himself, but he said that he had never been to America and was "afraid of getting entangled."

I said that I noticed that Jaya Prakash Narayan had become a member of the Congress Working Committee; did this mean that J.P.N. was going to become constitutional or that the Working Committee was going to be revolutionary? Nehru laughed and said: "Both, I hope". He then said that Jaya Prakash Narayan was a very fine fellow, and really not at all inclined to violence. I said that his speeches in the Punjab lately could be called nothing else except incitements to revolution and violence, and that they had certainly been understood as such by those who heard them. He said that he thought J.P.N. had been badly reported. He said he would like me to meet him.

I then raised the matter of public speaking generally by Members of the Government, and how embarrassing it might be. I said that I thought the less public speaking there was at present, the better; there was a convention in England that the speeches of Members of Government might be held to represent Government policy. He said that he had noticed that Members of the present Labour Government often made rather embarrassing speeches. I said that that might be so, but I thought that they probably regretted it afterwards.

I then went on to the summoning of the constituent assembly. I said that I did not propose to discuss the matter at present in any detail, but that I was sure it should not be summoned until we had settled the point about grouping. Nehru said that he agreed that it would be better that it should be settled, but that there must not be an

3. (1898-1982); joined I.C.S., 1921; Agent of Government of India in Sri Lanka, 1929-32; Agent-General in China, 1943-47; ambassador to China, 1947-48; Foreign Secretary, 1948-52; ambassador to Russia, Hungary and Poland, 1952-61.



indefinite postponement. I said that I would take an early opportunity of discussing the matter with him further.

I asked finally whether the Congress ban on accepting hospitality in the Viceroy's House was going to be raised, as I should like to be able to invite my Ministers. He said that he would consult the Committee and let me know, but that he himself anyway would have no difficulty in accepting an invitation. I then asked him and his sister, who is in Delhi, to dine on Tuesday night, and he agreed.

Nehru was quiet and friendly throughout, and seemed anxious to make no difficulties. As he left I congratulated him on his courage and statesmanship in coming into the Government, but said that it would never really be satisfactory until we got the Muslim League in.

## 75. The Call of Destiny<sup>1</sup>

During the last few days I have received a thousand telegrams of greeting and good wishes on the formation of the provisional government. They have come from old friends and comrades and from many whom I do not know. They have come not only from every corner of India but also from various countries of Asia and Europe and America and Africa. They have come from Indians scattered all over the world, often in distant lands, very far from the motherland and yet joined to her by invisible bonds that cannot break. They have come from foreign comrades and friends who look upon India's freedom as a mighty step towards Asia's freedom and world peace.

I am deeply grateful for all these good wishes and I am sorry I cannot acknowledge them separately. I feel in no mood to congratulate myself or others for we have yet to reach our goal and the path is still difficult. Though I am not used to prayer, it is in a prayerful mood that I approach this task, fervently hoping for the cooperation of all my countrymen in facing the difficulties ahead. I regret deeply that the Muslim League has for the moment chosen a different path. I shall continue to hope for their cooperation and the door for it will always be open.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 1 September 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 September 1946.

For this business concerns us all and we would be unworthy of the people's confidence if we functioned in a narrow way seeking the good of particular groups or parties and forgetting the larger good of the nation. My colleagues and I go forward as Indians thinking of India, working for India's freedom and the emancipation of her masses. If we forget this at any time then we shall have failed in our endeavour.

Destiny has conspired to test us in new ways and we have answered this call of destiny with courage and faith in India's future. The dream of her freedom that has inspired us for so long beckons to us again and seems nearer of realisation. May we prove worthy servants of India and her people. *Jai Hind.*<sup>2</sup>

2. The interim government was sworn in on 2 September 1946. Jawaharlal added a *Jai Hind* at the end of his oath. Mahatma Gandhi said that "the door to Purna Swaraj has at last been opened." The supporters of the Muslim League held black flag demonstrations.

**THE STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT**  
**I The Approach to the Problem**



## 1. Bad Start for a Big Change<sup>1</sup>

In January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration in the chamber, on behalf of himself and his brother princes, guaranteeing civil liberties and recognising the immediate need for representative institutions and efficient administration and judiciary.

I welcomed this, though I pointed out at the time that the proposals for constitutional change did not go far enough and should be based on a recognition of responsible government. I welcomed it chiefly because it represented a new approach and also because of the assurance in regard to civil liberties which had been wholly or largely absent in most of the States.

I believe some slight improvement did take place in regard to civil liberties in a few States but, on the whole, there has been no considerable change. I am constantly receiving reports of how civil liberties are being suppressed in many ways. This is distressing as it means that many of the Princes are not keeping to their pledged word.

All faith in what they said will vanish if action is at variance with assurance. This is a bad beginning for the big change that will inevitably come in the near future. I trust that all rulers of States will appreciate this and demonstrate to their people and to India that they mean what they say and are acting up to it.

Civil liberties are important and are an essential prerequisite for any form of democratic government. Indeed they can only be secure in a free and responsible government. Therefore, it must be remembered that the objective of the States' people is and must remain full responsible government. The same measure of democratic freedom must prevail in the States as in the rest of India. You cannot yoke together a bullock with a swift horse. There is no difference between the people of the States and the people of the provinces. Their future is one.

The Hyderabad State was not affected by the Chancellor's declaration and continues in most ways its medieval existence.<sup>2</sup> The State Congress is still banned and generally speaking it is an astonishing example of the middle ages having strayed into the twentieth century.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 5 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 6 March 1946.

2. The Nizam of Hyderabad was not a member of the Chamber of Princes.

## 2. Future of the States People<sup>1</sup>

Before I went to Malaya and since my return, I have been flooded with letters and telegrams from praja mandals and States people's organisations in regard to the States in the coming scheme of things. They are naturally interested in this vital question.

Obviously any major change in India, and certainly the recognition of India's independence, must take into consideration the States' problem. So far, however, there has been little mention of this problem. Partly this is, no doubt, due to the fact that some of the other major problems are supposed to have priority. 'The States' problem can be considered properly only when the other matters have been decided.

It is not helpful always to deal with a number of complicated issues all together. It is obvious that the States' problem, like the other problems, has to be viewed in an entirely different context on the basis of an independent India. It is this independence that comes first and colours everything else. Nevertheless, it is true that one cannot isolate one problem from another, and each one of them is inter-linked.

The independence we seek is not confined to a particular part or group and, inevitably, it is based on a democratic machinery of the State. That democratic machinery must exist not only at the top but also in the constituent units including such States as are big enough to function as constituent units. The smaller States will also necessarily have to be democratised though they will have to be absorbed in larger units.

The declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, in January last, was welcomed by me<sup>2</sup> not because it accepted the fundamentals of democracy and responsible government, which are essential, but because it was a new and fresh approach to the problem, and certainly was satisfactory in regard to civil liberties. In practice, it has not been fully given effect to and complaints have reached me from many States of its violation. The premier State of India, Hyderabad, is, of course, in this, as in other matters, a class apart and it still does not allow the normal civil liberties and freedom of organisation.

All this is strange preparation for the big changes envisaged all over India. These changes must come, if we are to avoid disaster. It is clear that such changes even in the States cannot be half-hearted measures, which merely disturb the old without establishing the new.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 29 March 1946. *National Herald*, 30 March 1946.

2. See *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 423-426.

Some States have attempted, rather feebly, to introduce a measure of dyarchy. This has not been successful and, in the context of today, has still less chances of success. Recently, it has failed in Kashmir where one of the popular ministers had to resign because he was given no opportunity to function effectively.<sup>3</sup> Obviously, no organisation or a self-respecting individual can undertake responsibility for the sake of form only without proper authority and opportunity.

It is true that in many States conditions are so backward, owing to the policy of the States and the British Government pursued for a large number of years, that it may be difficult to organise immediately a developed public opinion. In other States there is this developed opinion and it should not be at all difficult to take advantage of it and give it responsibility. These matters are capable of adjustment, if a proper approach is made. That approach can only be on the recognition of a democratic structure and responsible government.

It is clear that any constituent assembly, which frames the constitution of India, cannot ignore the States. It is equally clear that only a democratic representation of the States can fit in with the character of such an assembly. It should be remembered, however, that representation in such an assembly is a privilege which can be exercised only by those who accept its fundamentals and are prepared for a democratic form of government.

The All India States People's Conference, at its recent session at Udaipur, clearly stated the position<sup>4</sup> and the demands of the ninety million people of the States. That conference is today well organised and certainly represents a vast majority of the States people all over India. It has stated that it wants to deal with the Princes in as friendly a manner as possible so that we can evolve a new order for the States peacefully and cooperatively. It has also stated that such an order can only be based on the democratic freedom of the States' people and responsible government for them. That position holds good and nothing has happened since then to change it in any way.

3. Mirza Afzal Baig joined the Council of Ministers in 1944 and was in charge of public works and municipalities. But he had limited powers and faced opposition in the execution of his welfare schemes. Many important decisions of the State were taken by the council without his consent or knowledge. He resigned on 17 March 1946.
4. The Udaipur resolution stated that any political advance in India should go along with the establishment of full responsible government in the States, and in any future constitution for India the States should be represented by their elected representatives.

In view of the developing situation, however, it is the desire of many members of the standing committee of the All India States People's Conference to have a meeting of the committee soon. I think it is right that we should meet and consider all our problems in the new context as well as strengthen our organisation which covers practically all the States in India.

I have, therefore, convened a meeting of the standing committee on 7 April 1946, in Delhi, and I hope that all members will attend this meeting.

### **3. The States and the Constituent Assembly'**

I emphasise the need for giving due representation to the people of the Indian States in the constituent assembly.

It is dead certain that if the people are not properly represented in the constituent assembly, they will not only not like it, but will create trouble about it. The real question that arises today is how the people of the States should be represented in the constituent assembly.

It is unfortunate that the Cabinet Mission has not met representatives of the people of the Indian States.

I suppose they know well enough what the people stand for. Nevertheless, it is rather odd that vast numbers of the people of India, living in the States, should be more or less ignored in this way. Of course, in a strictly legalistic sense, the British Government has to deal with the rulers of the States, but when the whole structure of the government is going to change, it is obviously not only important, but essential, that the views of the people of the States should be known, and should prevail. Otherwise, there is going to be no peace in the States.

I visualise that there will be 15 or 20 States, which could join the Indian federation as units. The others, which are not big enough to be units, might be absorbed in the British Indian provinces, or they might group themselves together to form a unit of the federation, wherever

1. Press conference at Delhi, 11 April 1946 From *The Hindustan Times*, 14 April 1946



feasible. These units would have exactly the same status as any other unit. The Indian States system will cease to exist completely in its present form.

We want to avoid any conflict with the rulers if we can. The rulers of the big States can continue to be constitutional heads of the States concerned, but the question will have to be ultimately decided by their own people. The rulers of small States, which are to be absorbed, cannot function at all. We are prepared to pension them off.

Question: Why should Indian States put up with kings when kings are being removed in Europe?

Jawaharlal Nehru: It is not a question of some desire, it is a question of taking a very big step and of avoiding unnecessary conflicts. It depends ultimately on the strength of the people and various other circumstances. The main thing is to have responsible government in the States through democratic institutions.

I can conceive that the people in some States may like to have the rulers for historical or other reasons as a kind of formal head. In other States, they may not want them, in which case the ruler obviously has to go. But for the moment the States People's Conference does not think it a wise policy to lay down that all rulers must be immediately deprived of their palaces.

The Indian States system, as we see it today, is entirely a British creation. The problem for the States is how to get rid of the autocracy that has existed there and bring themselves to the same democratic level that will prevail in the rest of India.

Obviously, you cannot have democracy in one part and autocracy in the other. It will be a difficult problem to pull up the States to a common level with the rest of India, but it has to be done and to be done speedily. Whatever shape the future constitution might take, the Indian States will necessarily come under it.

I welcome the declaration<sup>2</sup> made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes on the civil liberties of the people of the States, but regret that it has not been given effect to in the manner we have expected.

2. The Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes had said that the Indian States, as a body, did not wish to hinder autonomous development of British India but desired to make every contribution towards the attainment of this objective. He assured that the people in the States would be permitted to have the freest and fullest enjoyment of civil liberties.

In the Indian federation, the States will have the same status as any other unit. The question of paramountcy might arise during the interim period, which I hope will not be long, say a year. British power should quit completely from all parts of India, including the States.

Q: What would be done if some States refuse to enter the Indian union?<sup>3</sup>

JN: To begin with, I would ignore their refusal. Obviously, it is very difficult to conceive of any State in the heart of India saying that we are independent and do not want to have anything to do with the rest of India. But I would not like to force a unit to enter the union. I should like circumstances to force the unit. The idea of a federal union has the support of the Indian National Congress, the States People's Conference and the ruling princes.

Q: What is your reaction to the discussions between the Princes and the Cabinet Mission?<sup>4</sup>

JN: Judging from press reports, they have taken up an attitude which is considerably in advance of any previous attitude taken up by them.

I understand that they have supported fully the demand for the independence of India and for the removal of British power completely from all parts of India, including the States. They have also, as a body, supported the principle of the unity of India in a federation of autonomous units.<sup>5</sup>

So far as this goes, it is satisfactory. But the people of the States are intensely interested to know how the internal structure of the States will be developed.

<sup>3</sup> The Nawab of Chhatau, Prime Minister of Hyderabad, was reported to have told the Cabinet Mission that Hyderabad was in permanent alliance with the British Government and that this relationship could not be abrogated without mutual consent.

<sup>4</sup> The Nawab of Bhopal, the Maharaja of Patiala, the Jam Sahib of Nawanagar, the Maharaja of Bikaner and the Maharaja of Gwalior met the Cabinet Mission on 2 April 1946 and were understood to have favoured the demand for complete independence and pleaded for a monarchical form of government in the States.

<sup>5</sup> C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Mirza Ismail, who were spokesmen for the bigger States, advocated a union of India in which States should be an integral part.

#### 4. The States in the Future Constitution<sup>1</sup>

##### Note I

It was stated that references to the merger of the small States to larger units of the federation had alarmed some of the rulers of these smaller States.<sup>2</sup> While some such merger might ultimately take place, it was desirable not to raise this issue at this stage as it would lead to unnecessary complications. The present issue was the attitude of the States as a whole towards the independence of India. Other matters were secondary and should be dealt with later as occasion arises.

It is perfectly true that the fundamental issue today was one of the independence of India and the withdrawal of every form of British authority from India as a whole, including the States. This would include inevitably the withdrawal of British armed forces from India, including the States. Once this primary objective was attained the other issues could be viewed in an entirely different context and would be easier of solution with a larger measure of consent of the parties concerned. It is desirable, therefore, to lay emphasis on this primary and fundamental issue of independence.

Nevertheless it is difficult to avoid references occasionally to other important aspects of our problems, more especially when these are raised and we have to express our views in regard to them. Broadly speaking the problems can be divided into two parts—national and local. The former means our problem *vis-a-vis* Great Britain that is to say the independence of India. Another aspect of this national problem is the

1. The Nawab of Bhopal in his capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes invited Jawaharlal, who was president of the States People's Conference, to Chikold (Bhopal State) for talks on the future relation of the States' people with the rulers and their position in the constitution-making body. They discussed the subject on 20 and 21 April 1946. Jawaharlal wrote two notes on the same days of his discussions. The notes are available in the J.N. Papers.
2. In 1936-38 the Government of India felt that in the event of the formation of a federation, integration of smaller States under cooperative grouping schemes for administrative and judicial matters was necessary. A scheme to attach very small States to larger neighbours was proposed in 1942. In 1944 an act for the attachment of small States to the larger States was passed. This was adopted only in regard to the Kathiawar States and the State of Baroda.

kind of federation that might be built up in India. The local aspect of the States problem especially would include the changes that are necessitated within the States in order to fit them into the national structure on an equal basis. This local aspect, important as it is, can be considered after the national aspect, though to a large extent the two are intertwined.

The changes that are envisaged in India lead up to a new situation, to an independent India, which is to consist of autonomous units federating together. While this new situation is being hammered out, given shape and given effect to, some kind of interim arrangement is necessary. This is necessary for two reasons: (1) The present system, from the Government of India downwards, is completely out of date and incapable of dealing with any of our problems. (2) If a big change is to come in the near future we have to prepare for it from now onwards and make the necessary adjustments during this interim period so that the change-over might be smooth.

The interim period thus has great importance, for out of it will arise the structure of independent India. It may be said with perfect justification that it is not necessary for us to consider internal problems at this stage in any detail because these matters will have to be considered and decided by the constituent assembly. The only fact on the basis of which we need proceed is the objective of independence, a federation of autonomous units of equal status and equal standards of democratic organisation. The rest can be left to be decided by the constituent assembly or such other processes which might accompany it. Nevertheless, many other matters do arise for consideration even though we might leave their decision to a later stage. Also we must have some blueprint of the future before us so that we might mould the interim period accordingly. It is difficult to fix the exact limit of the interim period. Usually a year is suggested for it. It may be a little less or a little more. But in view of the inevitability of rapid changes in the world situation as well as in India, it is highly unlikely that this period will be much longer than a year unless catastrophes overtake us in the world or in India. Such catastrophes may hasten the end of the period or lengthen it. It is desirable in any event for this interim period also to be in effect, if not in law, a period of real transfer of power to India from England. Probably it is not desirable to fix the nature of this changing period in terms of law, though some legal changes might be made easily and these might help, but generally speaking it will be a flexible and continually changing period when the law remains much the same as it is but the practice is entirely different, leading up to independence. During this interim period not only will the constituent assembly be

drawing up a constitution for India but at the same time the whole Indian States problem in its national and local aspects will have to be considered carefully by all the parties concerned so that the Indian States and their people should have a fitting and equal place in India.

It has been said that the Indian federation will consist of autonomous units. A very large measure of autonomy has been promised to the units, but the federation, if it is to function effectively, cannot be a weak or disjointed federation. It may be a limited one so far as the number of subjects are concerned but it must be a strong one more especially in regard to defence and allied subjects, such as external affairs, communications, tariffs, customs and currency. The federation, in other words, must be an organic federation and not a loosely-joined structure which threatens to fall apart. This is necessitated both by the international situation and by the urgent need of economic, industrial and social advance in India on all fronts. Considerations of defence are paramount in the world situation today and ignoring of them may lead to Indian freedom and independence being lost.

Just as the federation must be organic, so also each federating unit must be organic and not a loosely-connected grouping. This is necessary even more than the other, for if a unit is not organic it is not a unit in the real sense of the word and its administrative and economic machinery cannot function effectively. What must a unit of the federation be? It must have sufficient resources in terms of size, population, revenue and otherwise, to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. If it is to have an equal status with other units, as it must, it must have a political and economic structure which is in harmony with the structure of other units, for obviously if it conflicts there will be continuous pulls in different directions within the federation. It is recognised today that the structure throughout India should be democratic and must aim at the well-being of the people. There may be minor variations between the internal structure of one unit and another, but in essentials there will have to be a large measure of uniformity. This will be necessary also from the point of view of large-scale planning which is so essential if India is to make rapid progress in raising standards of living.

It is difficult to say how many of the existing States are capable of forming units of the federation as they are. It is, however, clear that only a very few of them can be considered, in their present form, suited to become units of the federation. Various estimates have been made varying from a dozen to about twenty. Sir C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar has stated that the number of such States should not in any case exceed

fifteen or twenty.<sup>3</sup> The number is not important at present. What is important is the qualification of such States and that is the ability to pull together with the other units and to have the resources to progress rapidly with the rest of India. To join the federation as a unit is not merely an obligation; it should be a privilege to which certain qualifications and obligations in regard to standards and methods of administration attach.

In any event it is perfectly clear that a very large number of States cannot, as they are, form units of the federation. They cannot, it is admitted, remain attached to British authority and paramountcy. Obviously also they cannot remain in the air. What then is to happen to them?

They may form groups amongst themselves so that each group might be big enough and strong enough, in the manner mentioned above, to form an effective unit of the federation. This is certainly possible in many parts of the country, more especially in Rajputana, Central India, and the Maharatta States, possibly also in Kathiawar and elsewhere. It must be remembered, however, as has been mentioned above, that such grouping has to be an organic grouping, otherwise it is not a real unit.

Even after such grouping to form units has been made, it is possible for a number of smaller States to be left out. Obviously, these small States cannot function for themselves in any way at all. There appears to be no way out other than absorption in some neighbouring unit. Grouping of States can only be effected when such States are contiguous.

Some eight years ago the All India States People's Conference passed a resolution in regard to the States and the proposed federation of India. This has been called the Ludhiana Resolution and it laid down a test in population and revenue.<sup>4</sup> Since then many changes have occurred and the matter was considered afresh last January at Udaipur. The following resolution was then passed:

3. C.P. Ramaswami Aiyar said on 29 March 1946 that he favoured the idea of grouping together small States which were economically unable to maintain a modern administration. Only an annual revenue of Rs. 50 lakhs could justify the existence of States or groups of States.
4. According to the Ludhiana resolution, major States should form democratic autonomous units in a free and federated India. Any such unit "must of necessity be large enough and capable enough of functioning as a unit of the federation, and all such States as are not large enough or are incapable of functioning as proper political and economic units must necessarily be absorbed in the provincial units or be grouped together, where feasible and practicable, to form a unit of the federation."

This conference is of opinion that only such States as have a sufficient population and revenue to be able to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare should continue as units which can join as such in the proposed federation of India. The primary consideration must be the people's welfare and progress. The Ludhiana resolution which laid down that only those States which have a population of 20 lakhs of people and over, or a revenue exceeding Rs. 50 lakhs, should be examined from this point of view so that the States forming autonomous units in the federation fulfil these fundamental considerations. The smaller States which are unable to come up to these standards should generally be absorbed in the neighbouring provinces. Where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons, a measure of autonomy may be granted to them within the province. In States so absorbed in, or attached to, provinces suitable provisions should be made for the present rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.

It is to be noted that stress is laid in this resolution not on population or revenue but on the ability to maintain modern standards of social and economic welfare. Another notable feature of this resolution is the suggestion that a measure of autonomy might be granted to a small State within a larger unit where this is considered feasible and necessary for cultural and other reasons. The States People's Conference was anxious to work out a solution as far as possible with the concurrence and goodwill of the rulers and the people and, therefore, suggested this autonomy so as to enable the State with a cultural or other background to maintain a certain individuality. This autonomy would, of course, be a limited one and for economic and administrative purposes the autonomous area would be a part of the larger unit. The desire of the States People's Conference to proceed in a manner friendly to the Princes, as far as possible, is evidenced by a statement that in States absorbed to a larger unit suitable provisions should be made for the present rulers and their personal dignity and position safeguarded.

That is the present policy of the States People's Conference in regard to this matter. It would appear to be the policy of almost everyone who has given thought to this subject. There is no other way out. It is not a question of doing anything which may be disagreeable to the rulers concerned but of following the inevitable logic of events which no one can ignore.

As has been said above, this question should be considered in its details at a later stage. No stress need be laid on it at present when larger issues are at stake. But when and where the question arises, it

would be unfair to all parties concerned not to face it in its obvious implications. It would be unfair because this would lead to misapprehension and subsequent charges of having been misled. It is clear that very great changes are coming over India and these changes will affect the States equally with the rest of India. It is clear also that India as a whole has to hang together and develop a certain uniformity, though it may preserve in many ways its rich variety and distinctiveness. Some of the States have long traditions and a historical background behind them and they might well preserve that identity and tradition but even those can only be preserved if they are in harmony with the dynamic and progressive tendencies of the country. To come into conflict with these tendencies or to obstruct them is more likely to injure them and to shorten their life. Democratic institutions are bound to come all over India and ultimately the shape that India takes, and that will include the States, will depend on the will of the people. There is no essential difference between the people of a State and those of an adjoining area, whether it is a province or a State, though there are differences between the people of some provinces and others in regard to language and other matters. Common movements have affected and will still more affect in the future the people of the States and the rest of India. There is no escape from this and wisdom leads to only one conclusion: to line up with these movements and indeed to lead them. Obstruction is likely to be harmful both to the large cause and to the individual concerned. It is possible, and in some cases probable, that particular States with their special cultural background may have a distinctive role to fulfil in the India of the future. But that role itself will only come in evidence if it is a harmonious part of the larger movement of the Indian people for national development. The future of India is potentially one of a great power advancing all along the line. That greatness and progress will be the heritage of all who help in bringing it about. The rulers of the States, whether big or small, cannot only be sharers in that heritage but can play a notable part in the India that is going to take shape. Their position can in reality be greater and more honourable if they have the capacity and the will for it than their present position.

This note has rather strayed from the narrower issue for which it was intended. But it is difficult to separate entirely one aspect of a large problem from the others. The broad framework of the problem has to be kept in view even if we are to understand a small part of it. It is desirable to proceed in the solution of this as of other problems in a cooperative and friendly way. Certainly nothing should be said or done which creates ill will and distrust, but at the same time one cannot forget the realities of the situation. This reality includes many factors,



among them being the great awakening of the people of the States and the growing and insistent demand on their part to be full and equal sharers in India's freedom to come. To make the people think that they are going to be ignored or bypassed is obviously a policy full of dangerous implications. This factor has always to be borne in mind. Indeed it has been sufficiently recognised by many Princes and many of their Ministers.

Though there are 560 or 561 States in India the problem is essentially one of the bigger States.<sup>5</sup> The smaller States will have to fall in line with others and, therefore, their problem can well be considered at a somewhat later stage when the compulsion of events makes people think more in terms of reality. Among these events is the major one of the inevitability in the near future of the withdrawal of the British power from India and the growth of democratic institutions and some form of responsible government.

The position taken up on behalf of the Princes before the British Cabinet delegation in regard to Indian independence and the withdrawal of British power and authority as well as paramountcy has been welcomed generally in so far as that goes.<sup>6</sup> On some other matters there may be and there is some difference of opinion. But it is fully recognised and appreciated that the primary issue has been put first and dealt with firmly. On that there can and must be unity of opinion and demand. As and when other issues arise they should be dealt with in a friendly and cooperative manner as between the Princes and the people's representatives, and it is highly likely that a great deal of agreement will emerge. The approach can only be one of serving the cause of India as a whole, of the States and their people. With that common objective it should be possible to find a common path.

5. Of the 562 States, only 143 were considered important enough to be mentioned in the Government of India Act of 1935. The rest were not really States but estates and the rulers did not enjoy sovereign rights. Even of these 143, only 52 were considered big enough to deserve separate representation in the federal legislature, while the remaining 91 were grouped together for that purpose.
6. At the annual session of the Chamber of Princes on 17 January 1946 it was affirmed that the States fully shared the general desire of the country for the immediate attainment of political freedom and intended to make every possible contribution to the settlement of the constitutional problem.

Note II

THE BUILDING UP OF A NATION

Yesterday and today I have had lengthy conversations with the ruler of Bhopal in regard to the problem of the Indian States in the future constitution of India. He spoke to me, as a rule, as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes and as such he was a little afraid of committing himself to anything specific. Sometimes he would add that in his personal capacity he was prepared to go much further but he wanted to carry others with him and this required tactful handling. He emphasised on several occasions, and I agreed with him, that the major issue was Indian independence and the rest would follow. On that issue he said that the Princes have put up a straight front. I appreciated this, whatever the reasons behind this attitude might have been.

When we discussed other matters there was a great deal of reluctance to agree to anything which seemed to limit the rights and privileges of the Princes. Of course a federation with common subjects had already been agreed to. Apart from this everything was rather vague. It was admitted that the federal centre would be the supreme authority regarding the common subjects. But the rest was supposed to be almost entirely in the domain of the States, or at any rate no commitment at this stage was liked. The reason for this was partly the fact that there was doubt as to the nature of this federation. Was there going to be one federation or two, one constituent assembly or two? So far as I was concerned I made it clear that I was proceeding on the basis of one constituent assembly and one federation.

One rather surprising suggestion was thrown out: that the States should join the federation in a body, may be through the Chamber of Princes. This in effect was some kind of a Rajasthan, though this word was not used. I pointed out that any such conception appeared to me to be wholly wrong and rather fantastic. Apart from many other defects that it suffered from, it would be a kind of loose sub-federation not even geographically connected together and varying in quality as between its different parts to an enormous extent. As such it could not become a unit, much less an equal unit, in the central federation. The point was not pressed and was only casually mentioned.

Another system casually mentioned was that there should be regional grouping of States, each region becoming a unit of the federation. For this too I expressed my dislike for more or less the same reasons.

Ultimately it seemed that the only feasible way for the States to join the federation was as suggested in my first note, i.e., for major States to join as units, for smaller States to group themselves together if geographically so situated and then form a unit or units, and for the remaining States to be absorbed in some existing unit.

We discussed various other matters, such as the preparatory period during which the States could come up to the common level of democratic, representative and responsible government which might prevail in the rest of India, the interim period from now till the framing of the federal constitution by the constituent assembly; fundamental rights etc. On most of these points there was considerable divergence of opinion and approach between us, and yet I was repeatedly assured that there was no great difference in regard to the final objective, i.e., the building up of a great Indian nation, or, as it was termed, a greater India.

**Preparatory Period:** This refers to the period that might be necessary to bring up the administrative structure of the States on a par with the rest of India. It was pointed out to me that the States, or many of them, were so backward and so lacking in trained human material that any attempt to establish full-fledged responsible government would end in failure and would delay progress. It was necessary, therefore, to have a preparatory period during which representative institutions could be progressively introduced and the people trained in their use. It was suggested that during this period the ruler should have considerable authority. The period may vary in the case of different States and some might hardly require it. Vaguely a time limit of fifteen years was suggested.

I agreed that many of the States were terribly backward and there might be difficulty in the way of finding suitable human material within the States to start with. That indeed was a reason why there should be a closer union with the federation which would help in many ways. That was also a reason for avoiding backward areas from remaining isolated from the rest of India. A backward area attached to a progressive area would be pulled up. Several backward areas grouped together would simply remain where they were.

Also it was not really possible to train people for responsible government without casting responsibility upon them even at some risk. Without responsibility they develop only the agitational aspect and this will give rise to continuous conflict and difficulty. It might be possible for a brief period to give full responsibility, but at the same time to have some checks to prevent misuse. A very important factor in the present situation was the awakening of the States people. It would be almost impossible to maintain institutions in the States which compare very

unfavourably with those of the rest of India. Besides it is highly probable that in some of the major States responsible government in some shape or form might be established in the near future. If this is done in some States the people of the other States would become even more restive and would refuse to submit to any form of autocratic rule. It must be remembered that the tempo of change in India, whatever the future might hold for us, was going to be rapid and inevitably the States would have to fit into this tempo.

The result of this talk was that the ruler of Bhopal expressed every sympathy for change in the States and for a rapid association of the people with the government. But he added that we must take things as they are and a preparatory period was essential. In his opinion full responsible government was not possible in most of the States today and would not even be in the interest of the people because it would be exploited for the advantage of some small group. Meanwhile, however, steps should be taken towards that end.

**Interim Period:** This refers to the period from now onwards to the establishment of the new federal constitution, a period during which it is presumed an interim national government would be functioning. Speaking as Chancellor, Bhopal wanted to have no constitutional relations with the interim government though he hoped that there would be friendly relations. As there were certain common interests he suggested the formation of an advisory committee consisting of, say, three representatives of the rulers, presumably nominated by the Chamber of Princes, and three of the interim government. This advisory committee would consider matters of common concern and would advise the Viceroy who will still function during this interim period as Crown Representative. The States, however, had made it perfectly clear that even during this period British paramountcy must go. This did not mean, according to him, that paramountcy should vest in the interim national government. Bhopal suggested, however, that he was prepared that a decision in regard to common interests may be left for the time being to the interim government and its legislature provided that there was full consultation with the Princes prior to any such decision especially in regard to policy. It might be mentioned that the common subjects at present are:

1. Customs tariff
2. Salt tax
3. Any other form of central taxation affecting Indian States
4. Railway policy
5. Air communications
6. Trunk roads

7. Posts and telegraphs
8. Wireless
9. Currency and coinage
10. Commerce, banking and insurance, so far as the matters affect both the States and British India
11. Opium policy
12. Indians overseas
13. League of Nations, presumably now the U.N.O., and its ancillary bodies

I suggested that it would be highly desirable to associate the people of the States with this advisory committee during the interim period. To this Bhopal would not agree though he expressed sympathy with the idea underlying it. He said that only governments could be represented in such a committee. Indeed it would be no easy matter to represent State governments because of the conflicting interests of some States, such as maritime States and others.

The Crown Representative would in form continue but this advisory committee for joint subjects was not supposed to advise the Crown Representative. Indeed the Crown Representative should be eliminated from any consideration of these common subjects.

Political Department: Presumably this department<sup>7</sup> would continue during the interim period though some of its functions might be transferred to the advisory committee. At present the Crown Representative can demand any sum he likes from the Indian revenues for this Political Department. This, I am told, is a non-votable item in the Central Legislature. I said that the interim national government must have a say about this sum. Bhopal did not know anything about it and said the matter did not concern him or the other Princes. So far as he was concerned the interim government could do what it chose in regard to it.

I suggested that it would be desirable for the Political Adviser during this interim period to be appointed by the Crown Representative in consultation with the interim government. Bhopal said that the interim government did not come into the picture and the Political Adviser should be appointed in consultation with the Princes or their representatives. He would, of course, want someone who was also *persona grata* with the interim government. The question really was one of informal consultation between various parties concerned. It would be difficult and undesirable for any fixed arrangement during the brief interim

7. The Political Department was directly under the Crown Representative and wholly beyond the control of the Government of India and generally functioned in a way opposed to the wishes of the people of the States.

period. After this period both the Political Department and the Political Adviser would presumably go, at any rate, in so far as the States adhering to the federation were concerned.

The objection to the interim government having nothing to do with the appointment of the Political Adviser to the Crown Representative was resisted by Bhopal as establishing an undesirable precedent of interference by "British India" in matters peculiarly relating to the States, such as dynastic matters, question of deposition of a ruler, etc. Few such matters would probably arise during the brief period and in case there was a serious complaint against a ruler's conduct Bhopal suggested that the matter should be formally placed before a judicial tribunal. The question had little intrinsic importance except that it brought out the fear of the Princes of intervention from what they call "outside" and the development of a kind of paramountcy by the interim government.

Constituent assembly: When this matter was raised immediately the question was put: Is there going to be one such assembly or two? It was difficult to decide till the picture of the constituent assembly emerged. Would there be treaties or instruments of accession? I said I was discussing the whole problem on the basis of one constituent assembly which would draft the federal constitution. It would not presumably go into the matter of the constitution of the federating units, but it might well lay down certain fundamental aspects of these local constitutions. No federal constitution could be framed without a certain uniformity in the internal structure of the units. That uniformity would mean a democratic basis, fundamental rights etc. The question of fundamental rights (which it must be remembered has been formally agreed to by the Chamber of Princes) gave rise to another query: Does this mean that the federal government would interfere with or intervene in matters of local concern like law and order etc.? I said that the proper course seemed to me when the federation objected to any infringement of fundamental rights or provisions of the constitution, the matter be referred to the Supreme Court for its decision. That seemed the proper method to deal with any such conflict. This was not interference with the unit's powers.

As for treaties or instruments of accession I could not quite make out where they came into the picture at all. States joining the federation came in on the basis of the federal constitution and ceased to have any distinctive feature as the State as opposed to a province.

Bhopal said that the Princes have taken no decision yet about joining the constituent assembly except that they have said that they might join it when they saw the full picture. He himself was not sure whether it was desirable for them to join it to begin with or to wait till a later

stage. He asked me what I would prefer in the matter. I said that I would not like any compulsion to be exercised on a State in regard to joining the constituent assembly. I would like the States to join provided, of course, it was in a position to function as a unit and provided also that it was prepared to bring up its administrative and other machinery to the common level.

The question of representation on the constituent assembly was considered. I pointed out that there was a strong feeling on the subject and if the people of the States were not directly represented there would be trouble.

Bhopal said that the prevailing idea among the Princes was that only governments could be represented but no definite decision had been taken. They were waiting still for the picture of the constituent assembly before they decided. It was quite possible that a measure of representation from elected members of States legislatures could be arranged for. Indeed there was a definite trend in this direction. This would apply to such States as had such legislatures. But most of the major States had them. The course even then will be for the State Government either to appoint the leader of the elected majority party or to allow the elected members to choose one person who would then be nominated by the government, or for a panel to be chosen by the elected members out of which the State government might choose one person. This kind of representation could only come in where a State had more than one representative in the constituent assembly.

If there was only one representative, then some government official would be that one; if two, then there would be one government official and one chosen from the elected members. There was no means of providing for elected representation, according to Bhopal, from the smaller States.

I pointed out that ever since the idea of a constituent assembly had been placed before the country stress had always been laid on the States being represented by their elected representatives. In 1942 the National Congress had rejected the Cripps proposals *inter alia* on this ground.<sup>8</sup> There was no doubt at all that the Congress would adhere to that position. Today the States' people, of course, were very anxious about it and I could not imagine their submitting to being represented purely by

8. According to the Cripps proposals the States were to be represented on the constitution-making body by a delegation in proportion to their population. But there was no indication in those proposals or in any subsequent pronouncements by responsible British statesmen as to how this representation was to be secured, that is, whether through the nominees of the Princes or delegates chosen by the States' people or by a mixed procedure.

the ruler's nominees. Bhopal said that the situation today was different from what it was in 1942. In 1942 the rulers had opposed Indian independence and more or less lined up with the British power asking it to preserve their interests. Now the States stood for Indian independence. They wanted to give up their association with the British Crown completely. They relied on their own people and their fate in future would be linked with them. Therefore the previous divergence had largely gone now. Then again, he added, the constituent assembly would deal with the federal constitution only and not with internal matters affecting the States. Because of this he thought the interest of the States people would not be so great. He was afraid also that States people's representatives might put up a very poor show, through lack of competence, in the constituent assembly.

Bhopal added, however, that as he hoped the Princes would consider the principle of some representation of the elected element, in the manner indicated above, no great difficulty would remain. I said that it might be possible to bring in the elected element with mutual consent but I was quite clear that on this issue there would be much heart-burning and trouble if any attempt was made to bypass it in any way. It had become a vital test for all of us.

Bhopal added finally that he had been speaking to me as Chancellor and he was unable to commit himself more because of that in regard to the many matters that we had discussed. He wanted to assure me, however, that all the States were fully aware of the vastness of the issues at stake and of the inevitability of change. In fact they were taking steps towards that end even now. They had already done a big thing by lining up with the demand for India's independence and the elimination of the British. He hoped that we would all avoid argument about details and bickering over relatively small matters and concentrate on the bigger issues which would lead to the greater India of our dream.<sup>9</sup>

9. Jawaharlal sent copies of these two notes to Maulana Azad and Vallabhbhai Patel.



## 5. The Need for a Unified Policy<sup>1</sup>

The standing committee of the All India States People's Conference met in Delhi early in April to consider the situation in the States generally and more particularly in regard to future developments in the whole of India. The committee was anxious to offer its full cooperation in the solution of the vital problems which were facing the country, believing as it did that no effective solution was possible which ignored the States and the people there. The committee appointed a sub-committee which was to continue sitting in Delhi and to watch the interests of the States people and to cooperate wherever possible in the consideration of various problems affecting them. The sub-committee regrets, however, that its offer<sup>2</sup> of cooperation was ignored and those at present in authority have proceeded to consider the problems both of India as a whole and of the States without taking into consideration the views and wishes of the representatives of the people of the States. Such an attitude is entirely contrary to any democratic approach to a problem affecting 93,000,000 people, and no approach which ignores these people can be effective or can have any permanence.

At the moment the sub-committee has no knowledge of what developments are likely to take place in the Indian situation, but the fact that the States people's representatives have been given no place even in consultation is a sufficiently important development for it to take notice of and to fashion its future work accordingly. It should be remembered that in a vast number of States there is no semblance of even semi-democratic institutions and there is, therefore, no possibility of any true representation of the people. In a few major States legislative assemblies have been created, but they are mostly of an advisory character and have been elected on a very restricted franchise. Where elections have taken place for these legislative assemblies the States people's organisations have secured notable victories demonstrating their

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal on 28 April 1946 for the sub-committee of the All India States People's Conference and issued as a statement to the press.
2. The Cabinet Mission had invited only the representatives of the Princes for the negotiations on the future constitutional arrangement. A resolution of the Congress Working Committee dated 7 April 1946 stated: "The State means not the ruler, but the people. Hence the demand is that Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the All India States People's Conference, should be called upon to open negotiations with the Mission on behalf of the States' subjects".

representative character. Even these semi-democratic assemblies have been ignored.

The sub-committee is well aware of the fact that conditions in the States are politically and economically backward with the exception of a very few States. This very backwardness which demands urgent change and reform is treated as a reason for delaying change. It is patent that in an independent India the people of the States must have an equal place and must also have the same civil and democratic liberties as the people of the rest of India. India cannot be half-democratic and half-autocratic, nor indeed can any organic federal union be built up on this basis. In the circumstances at present existing it is, therefore, urgently necessary both from the point of view of the people of the States and of India as a whole that immediate and far-reaching changes should take place in the States to bring them to the same level of administrative and democratic organisation as the rest of India. Otherwise the two will not be able to pull together. Indeed the changes in the States are more urgently required than elsewhere. The fact that this obvious point is being ignored by those at present in authority in England or in India is in itself a significant indication that true Indian independence is not aimed at.

The States People's Conference has offered its friendly cooperation to the Princes and has welcomed certain indications on their part of a change in attitude. The declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes assuring civil liberty to the people of the States was welcomed by the president both in itself and as a possible indication of a new approach. Subsequent happenings, however, have not justified this hope and recent events in Delhi and in particular the attitude of the British Cabinet Mission towards the representatives of the States' people have made it clear that the States people's movement must rely upon its own strength if it is to achieve its objective. The States People's Conference will continue to offer its cooperation to those in authority but that co-operation can only be on the basis of rapid change in the condition of the people and the structure of government which prevails in the States. The tempo of change in the world is dynamic and both international and national situations change rapidly from day to day. The States and their people cannot continue to remain static and unchanging or even slowly changing in this context and if normal avenues of change and progress are not open, other avenues will have to be explored.

With a view to consider the full situation as it is evolving today the sub-committee recommends that a meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference be held at an early date at a suitable place. The president should fix both the venue and the date of

the conference. It is suggested that, if otherwise convenient, Delhi might be the venue and that this meeting be held in the last week of May. Notice of this meeting should be issued as far as possible two weeks previously. Members of the general council, however, should be informed now of this approaching meeting so that they might keep in readiness for it.

It was decided some time back, at the invitation of the Indore Rajya Praja Mandal, to hold a convention of representatives and elected members of States legislatures at Indore. In view of the proposed meeting of the general council this convention should be postponed for the present and the question of holding it and fixing a suitable date for it be considered hereafter.

## 6. The Rights of the States People<sup>1</sup>

This meeting was fixed up about a month ago when it was hoped that the negotiations with the British Cabinet Mission would have ended. The general council was to meet then to take stock of the situation and decide on future action. As it happens, those negotiations have not ended although they may be in the last stages. Meanwhile, other problems also have arisen demonstrating the explosive nature of the situation in the Indian States.

In Udaipur, last January, we met in full conference and laid down the general policy governing our organisation. That conference was a remarkably representative one, and it may, therefore, be said that our decisions were the decisions of the people of the States in India. While firmly expressing our objective and our policy we made it clear then that we sought no quarrel with the rulers unless this was forced upon us. I said that our approach to the Princes must be a friendly one because the time had come when every Indian, whether he is a prince or a pauper, must realise that India must be a free and independent nation with democratic institutions. We appealed to the princes to put themselves in line with this overpowering urge of the Indian people. It appeared soon after that there was some response to this appeal when the

1. Speech at the general council, All India States People's Conference, Delhi, 8 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 9 June 1946.

Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration on civil liberties and the like. That declaration did not go far and no mention was made of our fundamental objective of responsible government. Nevertheless we welcomed it as a sign of change.

Unfortunately, that change was more in speech than in action though there was some action also in some States. But the past few months had brought out instances of gross deprivation of civil liberties and encroachment on the privileges of the people. Recently in Kashmir there has been a flare-up and the situation there is still tense.

I do not at present wish to go into the details of these occurrences. What is much more important is to understand this explosive background in the Indian States. Because we of the States People's Conference have deliberately avoided conflict, some people have thought that the position in the States is serene and quiet and the people there can be almost ignored. As a matter of fact the people of the States have changed vastly during the last few years and participate in equal measure with their fellow countrymen in other parts of India in the passion for freedom. They hunger for change and if a big change does not come speedily enough there are bound to be explosions. When a people, long suffering and long repressed, get this passionate urge, legal formulas are of no avail.

During the last two and a half months a delegation of the British Cabinet has been in India trying to find ways and means to settle the Indian problem. They have, no doubt, worked hard and tried their best, though no one knows yet what the result of their labours will be. But the most astonishing part of this long-drawn-out performance has been the absence of the representatives of the States people from any of these deliberations. In effect, the 93 million men and women of the States have been ignored and there has been deep feeling on this subject. It is inconceivable that any constitution for India can be made effectively or can be stable unless the feelings of these States people are fully taken into account. It is true that the representatives of the National Congress have spoken for the people of the States. We appreciate that and are grateful for it, but we think that the time has come when vicarious representation even of the best is not good enough. The States people claim to speak for themselves and they will see to it that they are heard. No one else, and certainly not their rulers, can speak for them.

Again in the statement issued by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy last month, the States problem is left entirely vague. Perhaps vagueness has sometimes advantages. It is certainly better than a wrong decision. But it does seem odd that this great problem affecting a quarter of the

Indian population should be left in this nebulous state. British paramountcy, we are told, will go when the new constitution functions. What then? Nobody knows exactly. Of course, British paramountcy must go not only from the States but from every aspect of life in India and the sooner it goes the better. That paramountcy has been largely exercised in the past for the strengthening of the British rule and against the people's movements in the States. But what does take its place? Does the autocratic ruler become even more than at present a law unto himself?

The rulers, with one exception<sup>2</sup>, do not say so and yet they want to be left in complete freedom to decide for themselves. That is that a group of individuals, however good or bad they may be, with special vested interests and privileges, are to decide by themselves about the future of those vested interests and privileges. It is true the elemental forces that are shaping India's destiny are much too powerful to be controlled or diverted by the rulers or by anyone else. Nevertheless it is odd that it should be argued that the rulers by themselves should decide the fate of nearly a 100 million people.

I referred above to an exception. That exception is Hyderabad State, that remarkable State which is called the premier State of India, and which also in many ways is the most feudal and backward. Alone among the big States of India it has not yet even evolved any kind of elected or semi-elected assembly. Alone also it has yet not removed the long-existing ban on the State Congress. This backward State claims independence for itself when the British go. How long this fictitious independence can last is another matter. We remember a statement made by the Nizam about two years ago—that he depended on the British for protection and, therefore, British overlordship should continue. It was a frank admission. Well, it is certain enough now that the British will quit India. What then of this protection and what of independence in the State?

These are fantastic assertions unrelated to facts or reality. That reality is that none of the States can be independent or can go out of a federal India. If that is so, as it is, then everything that we do now must take us to that end of a federal union of India of autonomous units with a democratic structure of government everywhere responsible to the people.

2. The Nizam of Hyderabad had said that the Hyderabad State would not join any constituent assembly, and "shall become entitled to resume the status of an independent sovereign, after the lapse of paramountcy."

Many rulers recognise, however regretfully, that this is inevitable. But they imagine that it will take a considerable time and that there will be many stages, but the march of events in India and the world does not permit of any tarrying during this journey. We have lingered already much too long and those who want to take things leisurely even now will be pushed by events.

Our objective is responsible government in the States under the aegis of the ruler as a constitutional head. That objective continues till it is changed. I wish to make this clear because of recent events in Kashmir. Those events have not changed our objective, though there is a growing feeling for change. Ultimately, of course, it will be for the people of the State to decide about the future of the head of their State. There is much talk about dynastic rights and the like. While we have accepted the continuance of the ruler as a constitutional head, it must be made perfectly clear that the only ultimate rights we recognise are the rights of the people. Everything else must give way to them. Sovereignty must reside in the people and not in any individual.

The immediate problems before us are: making of an Indian constitution, arrangements for the interim period, and democratisation of the States to bring them up to a common level of the rest of India.

It has been one of the fundamental policies of the States people that in the constitution-making body their elected representatives must take part. They will not submit to their fate being decided by their rulers or by the rulers' nominees. We hold by that.

It is clear that when a federal union is established each unit will have equal rights. There will be no paramountcy of one part over another. This presumes, of course, equal development and democracy in all the parts. There will be no paramountcy as it exists today, or it may be said that paramountcy for the whole of India will vest in the federal union government.

During the interim period, some kind of *ad hoc* arrangement will have to be made. Whatever this arrangement is going to be, the States people should not be left out of it. It is essential that there should be a unified policy even during this interim period between the provisional government and the States, and that in the formation of this policy the States people should have a considerable voice. It is not possible even during this period to continue the present arrangements. Even if to some extent the old form prevails the content must undergo a complete change. There has been nothing so reactionary in India as the Political Department. It might be possible to have a joint committee, with representatives of the provisional government and of the States, to consider all common problems and to develop a unified policy.

In this committee, the principle of the representation of the Indian States must be accepted. How this should be done is a matter for consideration. The object should be to avoid two kinds of deadlock: a deadlock between the interim government and the States, and a deadlock between the people of the States and their rulers.

The difficulty as it faces us today is largely due to the autocratic character of the States governments. If there had been democracy there, no difficulty would have arisen. Therefore, for this reason, as well as others, it is exceedingly important that urgent steps should be taken to introduce democratic and responsible government in the States. As soon as the government and the people are one, most problems vanish. That should be the immediate objective.

In regard to many matters which normally come under paramountcy, such as succession, maladministration etc., they may well be referred to a tribunal or to the Federal Court for decision.

I have referred to Kashmir. Many alarming reports have come to us about recent events there. Some of them have been contradicted. I have been trying to find out the truth of what happened and if I find that I have been responsible for any wrong statement, I shall certainly correct it. In such matters, there is both exaggeration on the one side, and an attempt to hide and distort what is happening on the other. It is difficult to find the golden mean. Obviously it is necessary even in the interest of the State administration to have an impartial inquiry into these events.

But an inquiry is not enough when day-to-day conflicts take place. Our colleague and comrade, the Vice-President of the All India States People's Conference, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, is in prison with a large number of his co-workers, and it is stated that there are going to be trials. Obviously, there will be no peace in Kashmir if trials and convictions of popular leaders continue. The British Government has repeatedly played that game and failed. The Kashmir Government is hardly likely to succeed. To Sheikh Abdullah and the people of Kashmir, we send our greetings.

One aspect of the Kashmir troubles demands our attention. That is the tendency, often encouraged by those in authority in all the States, to support faction or communalism. The policy of divide and rule has always been a favourite one of rulers all over the world. We must beware of that and we of the States People's Conference should specially avoid anything that savours of communalism. We stand for freedom of the people, irrespective of any religion or creed, and equal rights for all. To give as examples two major States in India, we stand for exactly

the same thing in Hyderabad and Kashmir or in any other State and that is the people's rule and sovereignty.

Big developments are going to take place in India, though what exactly they will be, I do not know. But it is clear that ultimately what counts is the strength of the organisation of the people. Therefore we must concentrate on spreading and strengthening the All India States People's Conference which has already grown so rapidly and so well. Let us make it not only a powerful voice of the people, but also a weapon to achieve our objective.

I have not discussed deliberately what the immediate future may decide — as to the acceptance and working out, or the rejection, of the proposals for a constituent assembly and a provisional government. The major decision in regard to that will have to be made soon by the National Congress, and that decision is bound to affect us in all the States. Whatever that decision may be, its consequences will be far-reaching. It may lead to some kind of equilibrium or instability or conflict. We must be prepared for all these consequences.

## 7. To T. Vijayaraghavachari<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
13 June 1946

Dear Sir T. Vijayaraghavachari<sup>2</sup>,

I received your letter of the 5th June a few days ago. It so happened that a number of prominent Praja Mandal workers from Udaipur were here to take part in the meetings of the General Council of the All India States People's Conference. I referred your letter to them and as an answer to it they have given me a long note. I have also discussed this matter with them. I am not going to trouble you with the note they have given me as probably you are acquainted with most of the facts. Their approach is, of course, entirely different from yours and various charges of inefficient handling of the food situation as well as other matters are made in it. What I am concerned with is something more fundamental.

All over India, including the Indian States, there is something entirely new functioning, a tremendous urge and push towards political and economic change, and this is in evidence in many aspects of life there.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. (1875-1953); earlier dewan of Cochin, at this time dewan of Udaipur.



The Praja Mandals have rapidly grown in strength and influence and undoubtedly they represent mass feeling. They are becoming the counterpart of the National Congress in the States. I have no doubt that occasionally Praja Mandal workers may commit errors or use intemperate language. We try to avoid this, but in a large popular movement it is not possible wholly to do so. After all our common people have had no occasion to be trained in the niceties of drawing-room etiquette. Their training has been in the hard school of hunger, poverty and suffering and it is not surprising if they react sometimes in undesirable ways. The Indian National Congress is an old and mature organisation with a very high standard of leadership, both from the moral and other points of view. And yet inevitably in the vast organisation that the Congress represents many things happen that we regret and deplore. The very conditions created by British rule in India lead to such consequences. So also the conditions existing in the Indian States lead to similar consequences. Indeed in the States there is less maturity or experience of public life while there is a tremendous urge for change and freedom. On the whole I think that the national movement in India and the new urge for freedom in the States have been conducted on a high level which can compare very favourably with any like movements anywhere in the world. It is easy to pick holes in them but the real thing to do is to understand their inner significance and the fact that they represent a new and growing power which must have its way. Old standards do not apply to them because those old standards of administration and thought are completely out of place in the present conditions.

All the talk of independence for India and responsible government in the States, which is so common now and almost universally accepted, and which has led to the visit of the British Cabinet delegation and the approaching termination of British authority and rule in India, is significant indication of this changing scene. It is a pity that the States have not fully appreciated what is happening and what is bound to happen, although there are indications that some rulers and their ministers are vaguely conscious of all this and are trying to adapt themselves to it.

The major fact in Udaipur, as in many States, is the continuance of an administration which is completely out of date and divorced from public opinion or influence. Where such an administration exists today there is bound to be continuous friction. It does not help much to consider small incidents or petty attempts at cooperation in regard to say the explanation of the forest reservation policy or the destruction of the pig population. The main consideration is the condition of the human population and what that population feels and thinks and wants.

During my visit to Udaipur in December/January last I came into

contact with many of the Praja Mandal workers there. I was struck by their high standard of service and capacity. Mr. Maneklal Verma in particular impressed me considerably. I came to the conclusion that the Mewar Praja Mandal was in good hands.

I suggest to you, therefore, that the root of the trouble in Udaipur, as in some other States, is the continuation of a system of administration which has no relation to facts today and, therefore, the immediate need of the moment is to popularise that administration and make it responsible to the people's wishes. Even during any interim period before a major change takes effect, it is desirable to have cooperation between the administration and the Praja Mandal, for the Praja Mandal represents as nearly as possible the wishes of the people of Mewar. Such cooperation must necessarily be on terms of some equality and consideration for each other. It is not cooperation to expect others to carry out decisions made without any reference to them. That is the type of cooperation which the British Government in India has often sought from us and which we have consistently refused.

As you are well aware, we are on the verge of change in India and the States and the next few weeks or months may well witness some of these major changes. Every State will necessarily have to fall in line with these changes. Udaipur and Mewar have a magnificent history and tradition and I should like very much for Udaipur to give a lead in these political and economic changes just as it gave a lead in the past in courage and chivalry.

I am sure that the Mewar Praja Mandal people will give you every cooperation and help in this great task.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. Congress and the States People's Movement<sup>1</sup>

A number of non-official resolutions have been given notice of, but as this session of the Committee is a special emergency meeting there is no time to consider them.

1. Remarks at the A.I.C.C. meeting at Bombay on a non-official resolution relating to the States, 7 July 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 8 July 1946.

One non-official resolution relates to the Indian States. 'The resolution<sup>2</sup> passed at the Haripura Congress with regard to the Indian States will have to be changed as that resolution hinders the work of the Congress in the Indian States. There has been a great awakening in the Indian States and there are different political organisations such as the National Conference, the State Congress, Prathinidhi Sabha and the Praja Mandal. The All India States People's Conference has representatives from all the States. Sooner or later, the constitution of the Congress will have to be amended or some other step taken to associate the States' people with the Indian National Congress.

Another non-official resolution asks the Congress governments not to resort to the use of the Defence of India Rules. I am not aware whether the Congress Ministries are using the Defence of India Rules. But I am aware that if those rules are not made use of, the question of procurement of foodstuffs in the various provinces might suffer.

2. According to the Haripura Congress resolution the States people's movement should be left in the hands of the local organisations.

## 9. The People of the States and Constitutional Changes<sup>1</sup>

The standing committee have noted with displeasure that the British Government in India as well as the rulers of the States are continuing to ignore the people of the States in regard to the steps being taken in connection with the constituent assembly. The people of the States will not recognise any decision taken without their approval and consent and representation from the States must come from the people by way of election.

Resolved that the following committee be appointed to prepare material and draft proposals on behalf of the people of the States for the coming constitutional changes in India as a whole and internally in the States. The committee will take such steps as may be necessitated by the meeting of the constituent assembly and by the States Negotiating Committee so as to ensure that the rights of the people of the States are safe-

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the standing committee of the All India States People's Conference, which met in Bombay on 9 July 1946. *The Bombay Chronicle*, 10 July 1946.

guarded and the aims and objects of the All India States People's Conference are advanced. The committee will consider questions arising out of the incorporation of the States in an All India Federal Union, Fundamental Rights, and the establishment of responsible Government internally in the States. The committee will confer whenever necessary with the Expert Committee appointed by the Congress to prepare material for the Constituent Assembly:

1. Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya
2. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah
3. Shri Bhashyam
4. Swami Ramananda Tirth
5. Shri Balwant Rai Mehta (Convenor)

With power to add two further members.

The standing committee of the All India States People's Conference congratulate the brave Indians in South Africa on the campaign of civil disobedience started by them for the repeal of the barbarous measure known as the Land Tenure and Indian Representation Act and for the vindication of their national honour and individual self-respect. The committee condemn the brutal and inhuman conduct of the Europeans in violently assaulting the peaceful and inoffensive satyagrahis and assure their South African brethren of their full sympathy and support in respect of their great movement.

# **THE STATES PEOPLE'S MOVEMENT**

## **II The Struggle in the States**



## KASHMIR

1. Attack on the People's Movement<sup>1</sup>

I have just learnt that Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, President of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference and Vice-President of the All India States People's Conference, was arrested yesterday afternoon by the Kashmir State authorities. At my request he was coming to Delhi for consultation. He was arrested *en route* at Ghari, 100 miles from Srinagar. I do not know the circumstances or ostensible reasons for his arrest, but it is obvious that this is a very serious matter both for the Kashmir State and for the States people's movement all over India. It is becoming increasingly evident that there is a general tendency in many States to attack the people's movement. Whether this is due to a desire to queer the pitch at the critical moment, or whether it is just the normal functioning of the State authorities, I do not know. I am convinced that this kind of thing cannot take place without the support and countenance of the Political Department and its agents. We know very well that in such matters it is the Resident who plays a dominant role. What has happened in Faridkot,<sup>2</sup> I am told, has been done with the advice of the Resident or whatever he is called. It is perhaps as well that this question of the States' people and their rulers and the Political Department is thus brought to the forefront when we are discussing the future of India. A decision has to be made as to whose will prevails ultimately in the States. Is the Political Department to continue as of old? Is the ruler also to continue in his old ways of irresponsible autocracy? What has happened to all the brave declarations made in the Chamber of Princes? What of the future when we are told India will be independent and the people's will will be supreme? Does anyone imagine that the States will continue as they have done with just minor changes in the facade? So far as the States' people are concerned and their organisation which I have the

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 21 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 22 May 1946.
2. For three weeks a complete hartal was being observed in Faridkot. Arrest of satyagrahis was continuing and leaders of the movement were being cruelly tortured. The Secretary of the Praja Mandal Jatha had been so severely beaten up at the police station that he became unconscious. See *post*, sub-section "Faridkot".

honour to represent, they will never agree to this. All talk of political changes based on the continuation of the States system in its old form is just empty and fruitless. In order to consider all these vital developments in the States a meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference has been convened for June 8, 9 and 10 in Delhi. That council, which represents all the major and minor States of India, will take full cognizance of these developments and will, no doubt, lay down its policy as to how to meet them.

## 2. Grim Events in Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

Both as the president of the All India States People's Conference and as a Kashmiri, I have been greatly troubled by the recent developments in Kashmir. I have said little about them so far, because I wanted more facts. My first impulse was to go to Kashmir, but I refrained from doing so till I had more information. I know that the kind of messages that we have been getting through press agencies are completely one-sided and unreliable. These press agencies only send out messages approved by the State authorities. I have now had a vivid account of the happenings in Kashmir from Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad and Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru who have recently arrived here. They will be issuing statements<sup>2</sup> themselves, and so I need not repeat what they are going to say.

Many questions have been put to me about the new orientation<sup>3</sup> given to the popular agitation in Kashmir with the demand for "Quit Kashmir" based on the Amritsar Treaty.<sup>4</sup> It has been, and is, the policy of the All India States People's Conference to demand full res-

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 26 May 1946. *National Herald*, 27 May 1946.
2. In his statement on 29 May 1946, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad said that the Prime Minister of Kashmir "still believes in force and repression... The people of Kashmir will not cow down before his administration."
3. While the States People's Conference demanded full responsible government under the ruler, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, on 17 January 1946, declared that the treaties and engagements were made without the consent of the people, and proclaimed its "faith that nothing short of full responsible government without the ruler's participation will satisfy the freedom urge of the States' people".
4. The treaty in 1846 concluding the first Anglo-Sikh war granted Kashmir to Gulab Singh, a sardar of the Lahore Darbar, in return for 10 lakhs of rupees, which he paid to the English.



possible government in all the States under the aegis of the ruler who is to act as a constitutional head of the State. That has also been the policy of the Kashmir National Conference of which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah is the president and leader.

During the last few months, however, the State authorities have been pursuing a policy of direct hostility to the popular movement in Kashmir and trying to disrupt it by various undesirable methods, including encouragement of the communal issue.

The position of the popular Minister there, Mirza Afzal Baig, became impossible and he had to resign. Subsequently, in defiance of their own rules, they appointed another person, who was till then also a member of the Kashmir National Conference, as Minister. This was the result of a secret intrigue about which no one knew.<sup>5</sup>

There was considerable resentment at these tactics of the State authorities and feeling against them grew. Evidently, they were bent upon creating trouble and many weeks ago they started bringing in the State army to the valley and distributing it at various strategic points.

Some weeks ago a committee of the National Conference sent a memorandum<sup>6</sup> to the Cabinet delegation raising the question of the Amritsar Treaty and demanding that this treaty be abrogated and Kashmir be ruled by the people of the State. This new policy reflected the growing tension in the State and the rising temper of the people against the State administration. There were many charges also of corruption and nepotism in the State administration. The new policy had not been endorsed by the National Conference or its executive. Normally it would have been considered by that executive on the 26th of this month.

But, meanwhile, events marched ahead. Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah spoke publicly about this new policy.<sup>7</sup> Personally, I think that it was

5. While Sheikh Abdullah was away in Delhi in connection with the Cabinet Mission, the Kashmir Government sought to create a rift in the National Conference. It won over a leader of the National Conference and appointed him a minister. The Prime Minister later admitted that he had been planning against the popular movement for the past eleven months.
6. The memorandum stated that as "the sale deed confers no privileges equivalent to those claimed by States governed by treaty rights .... the people of Kashmir press on the mission their unchallengeable claim to freedom on the withdrawal of British power from India".
7. Sheikh Abdullah had launched a mass campaign under the slogan "Quit Kashmir". In his speeches in May 1946, he suggested that with the grant of independence to British India, the people of Indian States, who were also Indians, should enjoy similar independence. The treaties and engagements between the Princes and the British should be set aside and a new basis of relations established.

unfortunate that a marked variation in the policy both of the All India States People's Conference as well as of the Kashmir National Conference should have been made without the full consideration of the respective bodies. But I recognise the feeling which gave rise to this policy in Kashmir and the total ineptitude of the State authorities which gave rise to that feeling.

I should like to make it clear that the policy of the All India States People's Conference remains what it was — that of responsible government under the aegis of the rulers. Indeed no one can change it except the Conference itself.

But events in Kashmir, as also happenings elsewhere in the States, are repeatedly bringing this issue before the people of the States and it is possible that unless quick changes towards responsible government take place in the States, the rulers may no longer be welcome even as constitutional heads. There is a great deal of talk of dynastic rights and privileges, but no dynasty or individual can claim to override the fundamental rights of the people. If the rulers remain, they can only do so by the goodwill and desire of their own people, and not by compulsion of external or any other authority. Sovereignty will have to reside in the people and what follows will thus necessarily be according to the wishes of the people.

I am not interested in the legal implications of the Amritsar Treaty or any other treaty. I am interested primarily in the good of the people and their right to decide for themselves what their government should be.

While, therefore, I think it regrettable that the issue of the ruler continuing or not was raised in Kashmir at this stage without reference to the organisation concerned, I must make it clear that it is open to any individual or group to raise that issue, if it chooses to do so on its own responsibility. If this is done in a peaceful way, no State has a right to suppress it.

What happened in Kashmir clearly demonstrates the desire of the State authorities to avail themselves of any pretext to crush the popular movement. I have requested Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah to come to Delhi for consultation. At a public meeting in Srinagar he announced this fact and said that he was going to Delhi within a few days. He further directed that no public meeting or agitation should take place during his absence from Kashmir. It was clear that he wished to discuss the whole situation with me before taking any other step.

Three days later he was on his way from Srinagar to Rawalpindi when he was arrested and about the same time a large number of his colleagues, both Muslim and Hindu, were arrested at various places in Kashmir.

The whole of the valley was handed over to military administration.<sup>8</sup> The police, being Kashmiris, were withdrawn. A reign of terrorism and frightfulness then began. Kashmir has practically been cut off from the outside world since then and martial law prevails there. There have been conflicts with crowds and firing on numerous occasions. My information is that far more people than officially admitted have been killed.<sup>9</sup> A much larger number who were wounded were sent to jails instead of hospitals. Srinagar is almost a city of the dead where movement is difficult and large numbers of people are practically interned in their own houses, apart from the many hundreds who have been put in prison. Clashes occur daily and even women have been shot down. But what is far worse is the deliberate attempt, reminiscent of martial law days in the Punjab in 1919, to humiliate human beings. I understand that people are made to crawl in some of the streets, that sometimes they are made to take off their turbans to clean the streets and pavements, that they are made to shout at the point of the bayonet "Maharaj Ki Jai". Dead bodies are not handed to the relatives for burial according to religious rites, but are soaked in petrol and burnt. The mosques, including their inner shrines, have been occupied by the military. A wall of the Jama Masjid of Srinagar has been knocked down to make a passage for military lorries. A dangerous feature of the situation is the deliberate attempt to foment communal trouble.

All this, and very much more, is happening in Kashmir today. It passes one's comprehension how any Indian officials could behave in this barbarous and inhuman way to their fellow countrymen.

But humanity apart, surely there could be no more effective method to make the position of the ruler intolerable to his people. The military forces under their British officers may, for the moment, succeed in shooting and killing and overawing the people of Kashmir. How long will they do that and what will be the results? Are they going to make the people loyal to the Maharaja at the point of the bayonet? That is not the way human beings function and that certainly is not the way the Kashmiri is going to function.

What part the Maharaja has in this sorry business, I do not know. But undoubtedly he will have to suffer for the policy of his administration. In any event the Ministers of the Maharaja must shoulder this

8. As the Kashmir police force refused to lathi-charge the civil resisters the force was disarmed and three units of the Kashmir State troops were flown back from West Asia to deal with the internal trouble.
9. On 22 May 1946, over 300 people were arrested and more than 20 were killed and hundreds injured. But the State censor reduced the casualty figures in news telegrams.

responsibility and they will have to answer for this before not only the people of Kashmir, but public opinion in India. What again is the part of the Resident and the Political Department in this business? They too will have to make it clear where they stand in this matter.

Whatever the rights and wrongs of any policy, there are certain limits beyond which no government dare go, except at its peril. The Kashmir Government has gone beyond these limits in its desire to crush a popular movement which is firmly established in the hearts of the Kashmiris.

Everyone who knows Kashmir knows also the position of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah there. He is the *Sher-e-Kashmir*, beloved of the remotest valleys of Kashmir. Numerous legends and popular songs have grown around his personality. He has been, and is, one of my most valued colleagues in the States people's movement, whose advice has been sought in all important matters.

Does anybody think that we are going to desert him or his comrades in Kashmir because the Kashmir State authorities have got a few guns at their disposal? We shall stand by the people of Kashmir and their leaders in this heavy trial that they are going through.

If they have erred in any matter, we shall tell them so frankly, but for the moment their blood is being shed in that lovely and fertile valley and all talk of legal niceties is quibbling. The fate of nations, when passions are aroused, is not decided by lawyers' arguments.

Kashmir by itself is important, but this issue obviously affects all the States in India and it is for all of them to consider its significance, more specially at this time when we are supposed to be hammering out the future of India. It is a bad sign at this particular moment for the blood of a people to be shed and for State authorities to display their military might in repressing their own people. The talks that we are having about India's future become pale and shadowy before this grim reality. Things have gone far in Kashmir, perhaps too far already. Yet they might grow worse. It is up to everyone concerned with Kashmir or with the States generally to try his utmost to cry halt to this. The Kashmir State authorities should also give thought to the inevitable consequences of their actions.

I have postponed my visit to Kashmir for the present, because I was not quite sure that I could render effective help at this stage. I want to help, as far as I can, in ending this terribly bitter conflict and the moment I feel that I can be of such help I shall go.

Meanwhile, I would appeal to all concerned, especially the newspapers, to avoid giving a communal turn to what is happening in Kashmir. I have noticed with deep regret some highly intemperate articles in the

Lahore press. It has been the policy of the State authorities to encourage communal troubles. We must not fall into this trap.

To the State authorities I would say that their actions are bringing grave discredit on their name and no government can live with that disgrace attached to it. The world still remembers Amritsar and Jallianwala Bagh. Are we to have yet another gruesome memory to pursue us in the days to come?

Let there be an end of all this and a calm consideration of the issues at stake. They will require all the wisdom and forbearance that we may possess.

### 3. Solidarity with the People of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

In view of the serious situation in Kashmir and all that is happening there I call upon the States people's organisation, its regional councils, praja mandals, lok parishads, State Congress and the like to express their sympathy with the people of Kashmir and to offer to help them in such ways as they can. I suggest that meetings might be held to this end on Sunday next, June 2nd. If it is more convenient for any local organisation, another suitable date might be chosen. At these meetings not only should a full expression of solidarity with the people of Kashmir be made, but the demand for full responsible government in every State should be reiterated. The time has gone by for half-measures. Collections should be made for the relief of sufferers in Kashmir and these collections should be sent to Shri Kamalnayan Bajaj, Treasurer, All India States People's Conference, C/o Bajaj and Company, 51 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay. It may be necessary later to enroll volunteers for special service in connection with Kashmir. For the moment we must watch developments but we must be ready for all emergencies.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 28 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1946.

#### 4. Demand for an Inquiry<sup>1</sup>

Kashmir affords a notable illustration of how things must not be done. So long as there was some attempt at cooperation between the State administration and the National Conference, unsatisfactory as this was, there was no possibility of trouble. The moment this policy was reversed on the part of the State the situation underwent a progressive change for the worse.

When and how this occurred, Prime Minister Kak,<sup>2</sup> in a press interview, has stated: "We have been preparing for it for 11 months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it".

It is interesting to remember that Mr. Kak became Prime Minister just about 11 months ago. Previously there had been a succession of other Prime Ministers. Gradually each was pushed out from the picture till Mr. Kak emerged as Prime Minister and supported this new policy.

I was in Kashmir in July-August last, soon after Mr. Kak had become Prime Minister. Already one noticed the beginnings of this new policy although the National Conference was still cooperating with the Government and one of its men was a Minister. The poor Minister had a hard time of it and ultimately resigned. One can understand easily enough, after Mr. Kak's statement, why that Minister should have had this difficult time, for the new Prime Minister was deliberately preparing to fight and crush ruthlessly, and without apology, the Kashmir National Conference.

Obviously, a Minister from that Conference could not fit in with this policy and had to go. In fact, the conditions that were created made it impossible for any honourable person to remain as Minister as they made it impossible for any popular organisation, like the National Conference, to continue to offer its cooperation to the State authorities.

Every recent development is explained by this frank admission of the Kashmir Prime Minister. He was out for trouble and he has got it,

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 28 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 May 1946.
2. Ramachandra Kak, an archaeologist who was librarian in a Government college in Kashmir before being appointed minister in waiting to Maharaja Hari Singh, became Prime Minister of the State in 1945.

relying on his army and making careful military preparations for his grand coup. These included the transport of Kashmir troops by air from the Middle East.

During my stay in Kashmir last year, I found that the National Conference went more towards cooperation with the authorities than most other popular organisations in the States. In spite of this, they were treated in a shabby manner and I do charge the Prime Minister with deliberately encouraging factionalism and communalism so as to weaken the National Conference. Later, when the question of Mirza Afzal Baig's resignation arose, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah refused to take any precipitate action.

Twice in the course of a month, he consulted me showing me all the correspondence on the subject. I agreed with him ultimately that there was no other course open but for Mirza Sahib to resign. While we pondered and considered and hesitated, Prime Minister Kak went ahead with his military and other preparations.

I am astonished that with this knowledge anyone should have the effrontery to say that Sheikh Abdullah or the National Conference precipitated a crisis. The big mistake they made was not to realise what the State policy was and continue to offer their cooperation for so long. It was only during the last few days that this realisation fully dawned upon them and they began to think in terms of self-defence.

I have seen reports of one of the last speeches delivered by Sheikh Abdullah in Srinagar before his arrest. Even at that stage he said that he would accept responsible government under the aegis of the ruler provided that the ruler was only a constitutional head. The fact of the matter is that the Kashmir State organisation from the Prime Minister downwards has irritated the people of Kashmir beyond measure.

Nothing moves in Kashmir and it is heart-breaking to see that paradise on earth running to waste because of incompetence. Serious charges are made against the administration. The Maharaja, who, to begin with, kept above local politics, has apparently given a blank cheque to the present Prime Minister, and inevitably the feeling against the Prime Minister and others extends itself now to the Maharaja also, for ultimately he is responsible.

He has not only kept aloof from his people completely, but even his Ministers could not approach him easily. Apparently his sole contact with the outside world is Prime Minister Kak.

Mr. Kak has stated that he would welcome my visit to Kashmir. Certainly I shall go there when the time comes, but when I go there my first object must be to see and consult Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and other leaders of the National Conference. Is Mr. Kak going to

give me full facilities for this purpose? Is he going also to agree to a full and impartial inquiry into all the matters that have happened during the last few weeks, including, of course, the ruthless policy of which he is so enamoured?

If he is so pleased with his own activities he should not be afraid of an inquiry into them. Mr. Kak has taken full responsibility for his policy. Let him justify it, therefore, before an impartial tribunal. It is no small matter to prepare for eleven long months for an attack on a popular organisation and then to hand over the State to a military administration with all the consequences that this entails.

Mr. Kak, when he talks about being ruthlessly firm, talks a language which no statesman or one responsible for the fate of human beings can indulge in. His very language condemns him and his policy. Blimps have ceased to exercise control in most countries. It is the unfortunate fate of Kashmir today to be in charge of Blimps.

Mr. Kak has raised issues in Kashmir of the most vital importance to all those interested in the States. In a sense, I welcome the enunciation of his policy, for that will mean a clearer decision when the time comes for a final decision, and that cannot be long delayed in Kashmir or in any other State. There has been too much talk of long periods of preparation for the States to bring them up to the common level. People will have to hurry up now, for events are marching swiftly to their predestined end.

## **5. Telegram to the Prime Minister of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>**

Press reports indicate trial of Sheikh Abdullah and others. I desire to organise proper defence. I request I may be given full facilities for this.<sup>2</sup>

1. 28 May 1946. *National Herald*, 4 June 1946.
2. The Prime Minister of Kashmir replied: "...the court will grant facilities for defence...on application from the accused."

## **6. The Futility of Repression<sup>1</sup>**

The situation in Kashmir should improve, and it is possible only if the State authorities withdraw their repressive policy. The people

1. Speech at the closing session of the All India States People's Conference, Delhi, 11 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 12 June 1946.



should control themselves, and suspend the movement but not under the repression of the State administration.

I feel that there are some tactical mistakes in the Kashmir movement which gave a chance to the State authorities to blame the people. In my opinion, movements in the States should not be started unless the people are sufficiently strong. States movements have not reached a mature stage. At the same time, the people should not tolerate for a single moment any attack on their liberty. If we want to get rid of the rulers, we have to oppose them with full force. We should be prepared fully to launch a movement.

The 1942 movement is one of the biggest movements, which shook the whole of India, from one end of the country to the other. Even such a powerful movement, which had the backing of the entire people, was curbed by ruthless repression. Yet the people emerged much stronger.

The map of new India is being redrawn. We are on the verge of big changes and the States also have to change. I am not sorry for issuing two statements on Kashmir about a fortnight ago.

## **7. A Government Hostile to the People<sup>1</sup>**

I have refrained from saying much about the Kashmir situation since I issued my last statement.<sup>2</sup> The matter is much too serious and grave for an argument to be carried on in the press. It was my desire not to say anything which might worsen the situation. My mind and thoughts, however, have been occupied with this situation, and I have tried to think of what should be done to improve it. I waited for the meeting of the general council of the States People's Conference, and I also gathered as much information about the events there as I could.

The general council has passed a comprehensive resolution which I commend<sup>3</sup> to the public. This resolution was carefully drafted and represents our joint opinion on this subject.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 12 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 13 June 1946.

2. See *ante*, item 2.

3. See *ante*, pp. 351-353.

I find that my concluding remarks at the general council meeting have not been correctly reported or understood. This is an additional reason why I should make myself clear in regard to Kashmir.

The Kashmir authorities denied almost totally many of the statements of events that I had made previously. I have now considered carefully a large number of reports coming in the press, as well as from individuals and eyewitnesses in Kashmir. I have also met deputations, some officially inspired and putting out the official viewpoint, and others representing another viewpoint. Entirely contradictory reports have been given to me about the events that had happened. Obviously, a searching inquiry is necessary to know the truth.

For my part, I believe that, during the first few days following the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah, the military behaved very badly, and many of the allegations against them are true, or have a strong basis of fact. Later, much of this was stopped by the Government. It is clear that one cannot hold the Government directly responsible for every act of the soldiery. What the Government is directly responsible for is the use of the military on this scale, and when this is done other consequences normally follow.

I should like to correct the two incidents I mentioned. I have enough information which can substantiate them, and I regret that I gave publicity to them without sufficient proof. These two allegations are the burning of bodies of persons killed and the breaking down of a compound wall of the Jama Masjid. Very probably, the deaths due to firing were much more than those admitted in the official communique.

How all these bodies were disposed of, I cannot say without much greater proof than I possess. As regards the allegation about the wall of the Jama Masjid, it appears that there is a wooden gate and a military lorry passing through accidentally dislodged some bricks of a column. This may have given rise to the story. Anyhow I am sorry that I stated something which was not correct.

These are relatively minor matters. The major thing is the nature of the action taken by the Kashmir Government from the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah onwards. I have no doubt that the arrest was wholly uncalled for and unwise, and the subsequent action taken through the military was extraordinarily provocative. It has amazed me how anyone placed in a responsible position can make the statements made by the Prime Minister of Kashmir. Those statements threw more light on the background of the situation than anything else that I know. He had charged me with being a partisan. He is perfectly right in doing so, for I am a partisan of the people of Kashmir, and I intend to stand by them, whatever the future may unfold.

The question is, on whose side is the Government of Kashmir, on the people's side, or against them? Recent events would indicate that it considers the people of Kashmir as enemies. If a government functions in this way, it forfeits all confidence and lays the seeds of trouble.

I do not wish to enter into any argument because it is my earnest desire to help in solving this complex situation. Obviously, this is important not only from the point of view of Kashmir, but of all the States as well as the whole of India.

Events today act and react on each other. The people of the States everywhere are closely watching, with the deepest sympathy, the happenings in Kashmir. As our resolution has shown, we must and will stand by the people there, and yet we would much prefer ending the present trouble. If, unfortunately, the authorities continue in the course of repressive action, the natural consequence will be for the people to oppose and resist this action.

I find that all kinds of stories are prevalent about Communist action in Kashmir, and the example of Azerbaijan is cited. A few Communists have undoubtedly functioned in Kashmir, but it is absurd to think that this movement is due to them. It is still more absurd to bring in Azerbaijan. So far as I am concerned, I do not agree with many aspects of the Communist policy in India, and it is for this reason that in the National Congress we have parted company with them. I should imagine that the policy of the Kashmir Government is more likely to encourage Communist activity than any other policy.

The fact is that Kashmir, which is not only beautiful, but wealthy in the real sense of the term, with enormous resources, potential power, and with some of the finest artisans and craftsmen in the world, is a country of appalling poverty. The fact is that nothing happens in Kashmir to redeem this poverty, and raise the level of the masses. Out of this degradation and suffering, a powerful people's movement has grown. This movement is essentially national in its outlook, though sometimes communal elements have played a part in it. It is not anti-Hindu, anti-Sikh, or anti-anything. The only way to deal with this movement is with friendship and cooperation, and with active steps to relieve the burden of poverty. It cannot be suppressed.

I have, unfortunately, been tied up here with important consultations, and have been unable to go to Kashmir. But Kashmir fills my mind, and I shall go there as soon as I can. To the Government of Kashmir, I would say: "You have erred grievously in many things, but there is yet time to remedy at least some of the errors. It is never wrong for a government to retrace a step, which has brought trouble in its train. To persist in error is not strength." To the people of Kashmir I would,

first of all, extend my deepest sympathy for all they have suffered, and are at present suffering, and my assurance that I shall do my utmost for their peace and advancement.

To the minorities there, I should like to say that their future must inevitably lie in cooperation with the majority. They do a disservice to themselves and to Kashmir by isolating themselves. They have every right to live the life of their choice within the structure of freedom which Kashmir must necessarily evolve. They have every reason to stand by their legitimate rights. But it is not a legitimate right to come in the way of the advance of the people as a whole or to claim special privileges which are at the expense of others. So far as I can see, these minorities will have an honourable position in Kashmir, but that position will never be gained by hostility to others, and the propagation of communal hatred.

Let everyone in Kashmir look at the problem in relation to what is happening in India and the world. That is the only true perspective. Governments come and go, but the people remain. It is the people who should count in the end and who make and unmake governments. Therefore it is only from the people's point of view that any real solution can be sought.

Sheikh Abdullah is at present in prison with many of his colleagues. This fact alone is a continuous provocation to many. If that provocation is removed, I am sure peace will come soon enough. For my part, I am not in the habit of giving up a cause I have espoused, or a comrade when he is in trouble. I shall stand by the cause of the people of Kashmir and of Sheikh Abdullah, who is their acknowledged leader, and I shall do everything to advance that cause. That means no hostility to any other group, rather it means the good of all who are connected with Kashmir.

## 8. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

I am reaching Srinagar on June 19 with lawyers for Sheikh Abdullah's trial. I still hope that in the interests of all concerned the trials will be given up and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues released. Such a

1. 14 June 1946. *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

step will lead to peaceful consideration of the grave problems confronting Kashmir. I would gladly help in the task and can meet you for the purpose, if you so desire.<sup>2</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. On 16 June 1946, the Maharaja of Kashmir replied: "...any outside lawyer whom the accused may engage will have to approach the Chief Justice for permission. Your coming here is inadvisable as it will only create complications."

## 9. To the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

16 June 1946

My dear Maharaja Sahib,

The day before yesterday I sent you a telegram to the following effect ...<sup>2</sup> I hope to reach Srinagar together with Mr. Asaf Ali, Dewan Chaman Lal and Mr. Baldev Sahai, ex-Advocate General of Bihar, in the evening of June 19 by car from Rawalpindi. The immediate object of our going there is to arrange for Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah's defence in the trial that has been fixed for June 21.

I am much more concerned, however, as I have no doubt you are also, with the general situation in Kashmir of which this trial is only a part. I should very much like to be of some help in the solution of problems that have arisen there. My main object in coming is to endeavour to do so. I want, as you must also desire, peace and development in Kashmir State. I feel, however, that it will not be possible to return to normality and peace unless these trials are withdrawn and Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues are released. Naturally, the present agitation that is still continuing in some form or other in Kashmir should also be stopped at the same time. This action will result in a proper and peaceful consideration of the various problems which those interested in Kashmir have to face.

I have, therefore, requested you in my telegram, and I would like to repeat the request here, that Sheikh Abdullah and others be released. As you are no doubt aware, Sheikh Abdullah was on his way to consult

1. *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

2. For text of telegram see preceding item.

me here in Delhi, when he was arrested. As soon as he is released, we can confer together and endeavour to devise means, which would lead to a proper settlement.

The problem of Kashmir is important enough by itself, and some of us are intensely interested in it. In the present moment, however, it has an additional importance in the whole context of the Indian States. The constituent assembly is likely to come into being soon, and each State and, more especially, the major States will have to consider their representation in this assembly. You are, I presume, aware of the popular demand put forward both by the Indian National Congress and the All India States People's Conference that representation in the constituent assembly should be by means of representatives elected by the people. All these and similar problems have to be faced very soon. It is obvious that the difficulty inherent in these problems will be greatly increased if the situation in Kashmir is abnormal, and the State is in conflict with the popular organisation there. Therefore, in the interest of the State authorities as well as of the people, a rapid return to normality is eminently desirable.

It is very difficult for me at this delicate stage of negotiations with the British Cabinet delegation to leave Delhi even for a day. But I am so greatly interested in doing something for Kashmir that I have decided to leave Delhi and to try my best to help in finding a solution. The solution would be easy enough, if you and your Government also desire it. I have suggested, in my telegram, that I would gladly meet you to discuss these matters if you so desire. My visit to Srinagar on this occasion will necessarily be brief, as I have to come back as soon as possible to Delhi for talks with the Cabinet delegation and the Viceroy. But even during this visit, it may be possible to lay the foundations of a settlement. If necessary, I can return to Srinagar a little later for further conversations.

I am asking my colleague, Mr. Dwarka Nath Kachru, to take this letter so that you may get it before my arrival in Srinagar, and be acquainted more fully with my approach to this problem. I hope that my impending brief visit to Kashmir will yield results, which will be satisfactory to all parties concerned.<sup>3</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. A note of the Kashmir State Government stated that this letter was delivered on 19 June 1946 and before a reply could be sent, Jawaharlal had defied the ban on his entry into the State.

## 10. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

17 June 1946

Received your telegram.<sup>2</sup> I am surprised to learn that you consider my visit will lead to complications. I am going to Kashmir to help in putting an end to complications already existing and easing the unfortunate situation which has already lasted too long. As such, the State authorities should welcome my visit and give all facilities. Isolation and avoidance of personal contacts lead to unnecessary difficulties; hence my desire to study the situation for myself and meet you. I have sent a letter to you by messenger.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

2. The Maharaja of Kashmir had telegraphed on 17 June 1946: "...your coming ...at this juncture will entail unfortunate consequences..."

## 11. The Purpose of the Visit<sup>1</sup>

The purpose of my visit to Kashmir is three-fold: I am going to Kashmir to arrange for the defence of Sheikh Abdullah, secondly, to see things for myself, although my visit to Srinagar will be a brief one, and thirdly, to do all I can to put an end to the complications arising from the policy of the Kashmir Government.

**Question:** How would you react if the Kashmir State bans your entry?

Jawaharlal Nehru: Let me have a little rest. There can be no peace in Kashmir unless Sheikh Abdullah is released.

**Q:** Would you comment on the report that there are two groups in the Working Committee — one in favour of accepting the Cabinet

1. Interview to the press at Lahore airport *en route* to Kashmir, 19 June 1946. Based on reports in *National Herald*, 20 June, and *The Hindustan Times*, 20 June 1946.

Mission's proposals in a spirit of trial and the other standing out for amendments?

JN: Such a speculation is absurd as there is bound to be some diversity of opinion when 12 persons are having important discussions.

Q: What is your comment on the press report that Gandhiji who holds certain views regarding the Cabinet Mission's proposals might cease to act as adviser to the Congress?

JN: Your question deserves no reply.

## 12. At the Border of the State<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: My patience has been exhausted by waiting at the customs house for three hours. I have torn down such orders before, and will ignore it now. Nobody has ever dared to check my movements. I will enter Srinagar, though it may take me weeks. I will not go back. I do not recognise the authority issuing such an order and I am not bound by it. I am already in Kashmir territory and have actually defied your orders. The only course open to you is to remove me forcibly by arresting me. I do not recognise your Government and will not obey the State's orders.

District Magistrate: How would you like your order being disobeyed when you join the Government?

JN: That will be a popular government depending on the nation, quite different from the Government you represent. Yours is a tyrannical government. It is misbehaving.

1. This was the passage-at-arms that took place between Jawaharlal and the District Magistrate who met him at Kohala bridge and served an order prohibiting his entry into Kashmir territory on 19 June 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 21 June 1946.



DM: I might have to resort to firing, if the situation gets out of hand.

JN: I do not mind a few people being killed as it would only give further impetus to my mission in Kashmir. My duty is in Kashmir. The Viceroy and my colleagues in the Congress Working Committee urged me to remain in Delhi where important negotiations are being held. I plainly told them that my place was in Kashmir. The Kashmir State authorities probably do not realise that they are dealing with the President-elect of the Indian National Congress. I know no going back.<sup>2</sup>

2. With these words Jawaharlal dashed forward, defying the military cordon.

### 13. To Kishan Dar<sup>1</sup>

20 June 1946

Dear Mr. Dar,<sup>2</sup>

As you are aware our party was proceeding to Srinagar in connection with the trial of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah which is fixed for tomorrow there. Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal were to appear as counsel for the defence. Several days ago an application was presented to the Chief Justice of Kashmir for permission for them to appear in this case. I was proceeding to Srinagar with a view to advising my colleagues in regard to the conduct of the case.

Yesterday afternoon at Kohala you served an order on me under the Defence of Kashmir Rules, which I considered wholly unjustifiable, asking me to leave Kashmir territory immediately and not to return to it without written permission. I told you then that I was unable to carry out these directions. I had come to help in the defence of Sheikh Abdullah's case and I did not propose to go back without going to Srinagar for this purpose. It was open to you forcibly to prevent me from proceeding further or to take me out of Kashmir State territory. As a matter of fact my remaining in that territory was in itself a disobedience of the order served upon me.

I had no desire to put additional difficulties in your way and hence I waited at Kohala for five hours in order to give you time to communicate with your superior authorities. As, however, no special directions

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, pp. 18-19, N.M.M.L.

2. District Magistrate and Governor of Kashmir.

came for you or were communicated to us, I started walking in the direction of Domel accompanied by my colleagues. An attempt was made to stop us, but gradually we advanced about two or three hundred yards. We then had another talk with you and put it to you that you should either arrest us or allow us to proceed. You were prepared to do neither. You did arrest, however, my colleague Pandit Dwarkanath Kachru, though it was not clear to me how his case differed from that of the others. In regard to all the others, excepting myself, you said that they were free to go ahead.

Somewhat later we gathered that you had gone to Domel, and the police and military, who were barring our way, had been removed. It was late at night then and we also proceeded to the Domel dak bungalow where we spent the night.

I should like to know what the position is in regard to me and my colleagues. Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal propose to go to Srinagar to confer in Sheikh Abdullah's case with other lawyers and with Sheikh, Saheb himself. As the case is fixed for tomorrow it is necessary for this conference to take place today at the latest. They have been told, however, by you that they cannot go to Srinagar or indeed leave Domel. They have further been told by you that they as well as all the other members of the party may consider themselves technically under arrest. Thus, I presume, I am also under arrest.

I should like to be perfectly clear about this matter. Am I at the present moment under arrest? Are Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal under arrest, and are the other members of the party also under arrest? Obviously, we have to consider our own course of action and before we do so we should be told definitely how matters stand. I should like an answer in writing so that there might be no misapprehension.

In particular I should like you to appreciate that Messrs. Asaf Ali and Chaman Lal are to appear as counsel in Sheikh Abdullah's case and preventing them from proceeding to Srinagar today will be interfering with the arrangements for the defence.

I am for the moment staying on here in Domel dak bungalow awaiting your reply to this letter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

14. To Padmaja Naidu<sup>1</sup>

Domel  
 June 20, 1946  
 9 p.m.

Bebec dear,

I am resting by the side of the river Jhelum. It is an agreeable enough spot, though I wish it was not quite so warm in the day time. The night was cool and pleasant. Domel—the junction of two rivers, the Jhelum and the Kishanganga. The Jhelum is the bigger and full of muddy water. This morning it was dark red, probably because of heavy rain above and the nature of the rocks through which it passes. The Kishanganga is crystal clear. Unfortunately we cannot reach the Kishanganga as it is on the other side. There is a legend that when Noor Jahan arrived here once with Jahangir, she was tired and her eyes were full of dust and smarting. She washed them in the waters of the Kishanganga and she felt so refreshed that she called the river Nainsukh—the delight of the eyes.

So here I am. I have passed this place many times, stopping here for a meal, but ever since the advent of the motor age I have not spent a night here. Now perhaps we may have to spend many nights for we are supposed to be detenus (or is it detenues?). Asaf Ali and Chaman Lal were with me till this afternoon. They managed to get permission as lawyers to proceed to Srinagar. Now there is Mohamad Yunus, an I.N.A. officer, Mathai,<sup>2</sup> Hari, and a newspaper correspondent. Apparently we are all detenus for the moment.

I am told that there are vague rumours to the effect that I was injured last evening. This is not true. No one was injured, though Chaman Lal complained today of pains in the body. And yet it is easy enough to get injured when bayonets are at hand. One particular bayonet, held by an excited and panic-stricken soldier, was very near me. The armed police also loaded their guns for emergencies and when people are panicky, loaded guns might well go off. As a matter of fact no such accident happened and we are all safe and sound of limb and body, rather the better for the adventure. Anyway I am, for I was feeling oppressed and unhappy at recent developments in Delhi—the gradual, inexorable closing in of a net—a sense of being tied hand and foot

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. M.O. Mathai (1909-1981); member of Jawaharlal's personal staff, 1946-59.

and strangled. I feel that at least I have put my head out of the net for a while and breathed more freely. That is something gained.

I fear that many of my colleagues as well as others will not be too pleased with me for creating complications. I did not deliberately do so, but I think it is true that at the back of my mind there was a faint hope that the Government will be stupid enough to create a situation to my liking. That hope was realised. Also that this business would give a touch of reality to our long-drawn out talks. It is not the Maharaja of Kashmir alone who would profit by it, but all rulers of States, and the Viceroy, and many others.

Yet it is odd enough. Here people are talking in terms of a provisional government of which they expect me to be a member. And here I am behaving as a reckless agitator of old needlessly, so they will say, upsetting everybody's apple cart. Sometimes such an upset is good, so I think.

As I was writing this the District Magistrate (who is also Governor of Kashmir) came and told me that the head of the Kashmir army, a fellow named General Scott, has visited him here and is very worried and panicky. He expects numerous *jathas* from the Punjab to invade this place. He is also not sure about me—I might run away. So he suggests that I might be moved further up the valley. I have told him that I have no objection at all to this. The nearer I am taken to Srinagar the better, for Srinagar is my present goal and I do not propose to go back till I have reached it. So I await further orders.

The District Magistrate happens to be distantly related to me. His son has married the daughter of a first cousin of mine—rather a nice girl. He, the D.M., has had a bad time at this job. And yet perhaps he saved the situation from deteriorating. A slight error in judgment might well have led to a minor disaster.

We were stopped at Kohala yesterday afternoon. That is where the State boundary begins. For five hours we waited there patiently for further instructions from Srinagar. A number of people had been brought on 3 lorries from Srinagar & neighbourhood with black flags to shout 'Go Back Jawaharlal'. There were Muslims (of the Muslim Conference) some Kashmiri Pandits & others. They were obviously brought by the State people and some of them confessed to having been paid a rupee or 2 rupees for the day. They stopped shouting at a gesture from a police officer. They shouted on one side—on the other, a small crowd collected, reinforced by a lorry load of stout Punjabis from Murree, and these people outshouted the others. Give me the Punjabi any day in a competition of shouting slogans. He has a perfect genius for inventing new slogans on the spot. So for many hours we had shouting and

singing of national songs. Of course there were plenty of offensive epithets for the black flaggers. "Bhare ke tatttu, hai, hai."<sup>2</sup> Some school boys from a neighbouring national school enlivened the proceedings by their singing.

After five hours of waiting I got rather fed up and decided to do something. So after due notice we started walking in the direction of Srinagar. We were stopped by the armed police (or soldiers?). Some had bayonets, some had lathis, some guns. We slowly pushed through them. They tried of course to stop us—we were about two or three dozen. But most of them were not inclined to use their lathis. But they pushed their bayonets threateningly and it was just chance that no one was hurt. The order to load guns was given by a police officer. But the D.M. kept cool, though he was agitated enough. Gradually it all became a kind of procession with the police marching along ahead of us and surrounding us. We went about 200 or 300 yards and then stopped for a parley.

Meanwhile, the black-flaggers seeing us on the march fled precipitately stumbling in the process. Later some of them came to us and apologized privately.

It was 9 p.m. Somebody had arranged for food for us. We spread a durree in the middle of the road and had a good feed. The D.M. came to the conclusion that it was no good for him and for us to spend the night on the road. He hinted that we could go to the next dak bungalow, 21 miles further up towards Srinagar. He removed his police and we motored up to Domel where we spent the night. And here we are still. I am waiting for further developments. Can we go further up or not?

Love

Jawahar

The sound of running water is very pleasant and soothing.  
The Jhelum is just below the dak bungalow.

3. "Hired men, down, down."

### 15. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

Your message<sup>2</sup> conveyed to me, also news postponement Sheikh Abdullah's trial to July 1. In view grave discourtesy offered to me by Kashmir Government in spite my friendly approaches, deeply regret wholly unable return until full liberty of movement, including visit to Srinagar, accorded to me. Request Working Committee proceed without me.

Jawaharlal

1. 21 June 1946. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. In his telegram sent on 21 June, Maulana Azad said: "The Working Committee advises you to return to Delhi, as promised, tomorrow. 'The Working Committee's fixed discussion awaits your return. I have asked H.H. the Maharaja of Kashmir to adjourn Sheikh Abdullah's case."

### 16. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>

Received your message<sup>2</sup> at one afternoon. In obedience directions Working Committee am prepared return immediately on understanding come back Kashmir later. Early return only possible by aeroplane from Srinagar. No service planes available Srinagar or Pindi. Am under detention and can make no arrangements. Shall await facilities for return.

Jawaharlal

1. 22 June 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 10, N.M.M.L.
2. See *ante*, page 246, footnote 6.

**17. To the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>**

Dak bungalow,  
Uri, Kashmir  
22 June 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahab,

My last letter to you, which was taken personally by Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was followed by various activities on the part of the Kashmir Government resulting in my arrest and detention as well as the arrest and detention of a number of my colleagues. In these circumstances perhaps another letter from me would hardly be called for. But I feel that I owe it to you and to myself to send you this letter.

In my telegrams and letter to you sent from Delhi I made every effort to approach you in a courteous and friendly manner. I wanted to avoid any undesirable development and to help in solving, or at any rate easing, a situation which could not be welcomed by anyone concerned with the welfare of Kashmir. I regret that you did not appreciate my approach to this question and instead permitted your Government to take the action it did. I consider this action not only a grave discourtesy personally, which would not matter very much, but to the organisations I have the honour to represent. I am not agreeable at any time or at any place to my freedom of movement being interfered with, whether it is an Indian State or the rest of India. Inevitably I could not agree to obey the order served on me at Kohala. I am convinced that it was a major error on the part of your Government to arrest Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah as he was going to Delhi to meet me. It was the second major error of your Government to stop me from going to Srinagar in connection with Sheikh Abdullah's case. The consequences of these actions are patent, and I can hardly conceive that the Kashmir Government is pleased with its own activities or with the consequences these activities have led to.

In view of the direction of the Congress Working Committee, conveyed to me by the Congress President, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, I have decided to return immediately to Delhi provided facilities are available for the purpose. I have done so, however, on the distinct understanding that I shall return to Kashmir as soon as the urgent work in Delhi permits me to do so. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's case has been adjourned has facilitated my present return. As soon as the date of my return to Kashmir is fixed up I shall inform you of

1. A.I.C.C. File No. C-16, 1946-48, pp. 8-9, N.M.M.L.

it. I do not know how your Government will view my return and whether it will again attempt to stop it or not. If any such order is passed with a view to stopping me, I shall be unable to obey it. I see no justification whatever for any Government, least of all the Kashmir Government at present, to try to stop the entry of an individual like me, and I cannot submit to any such restriction on my freedom of movement. I trust, however, that no obstruction will be placed in my way in carrying out my programme.

One of my colleagues, Shri Dwarkanath Kachru, was arrested at Kohala apparently for doing just what most of us did on the occasion. The reason for differentiating his case from others is not clear to me.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 18. On the Decision to Return<sup>1</sup>

I received an urgent summons from the Congress President this afternoon at Uri in which I was told that the Working Committee desired my presence immediately as various important matters were awaiting decision. I was told I could return to Kashmir later. In view of this direction of the Congress President and the Working Committee, I decided to return to Delhi.

The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's case has been postponed also facilitated my return. We left Uri at about 4 p.m.

At Uri, for the last two days, we were kept as detenus in the dak bungalow which was converted into some kind of a prison for this purpose, guarded by the military. I have been rather out of touch with the happenings in the country since I entered Kashmir.

1. Interview to the press, Rawalpindi, 22 June 1946. From *The Hindu*, 23 June 1946.



## 19. An Account of the Episode<sup>1</sup>

For the last four days, I have been rather cut off from outside newspapers and news. I find now that, as is usual, rather exaggerated accounts of various occurrences have appeared in the press. So I shall give a brief account of the happenings as I see them.

Our party reached Kohala on 19 June in the afternoon and, after lunching at the dak bungalow, as we crossed the bridge into Kashmir territory about 2.30 p.m., I was served with an order under the Defence of Kashmir Rules asking me to leave Kashmir. I said that I was unable to obey that order as I saw no justification for it, and I proposed to remain there. The road further on was blocked by a wooden barrier and by the police and the military. Our party sat on the roadside, or in the small customs hut, for a long time. The District Magistrate had said that he would communicate with the higher authorities and asked me to wait for an answer. I agreed to do so.

We grew rather impatient as hour after hour went by and no answer came. Ultimately, at about 7.45 p.m., I told the District Magistrate that I could not remain like that on the wayside any longer, and I proposed to march on foot towards Domel on Srinagar Road. Obviously, I could not go very far on foot and Srinagar was 132 miles further on.

While we were waiting, some residents of Kohala, chiefly young men and schoolboys, had gathered at the spot. They sang national songs and raised our usual slogans. On the police side three lorries had brought a number of people from Srinagar or the neighbourhood with black flags. They were shouting 'Jawaharlal, go back'. They were, however, quite disciplined about it and when a police officer raised his hand, they stopped shouting immediately. Later, in the evening, some of these black flag demonstrators came to us and apologised privately and said that they had been paid for the occasion.

When the news of my being stopped reached Murree, about 25 Congressmen from there came over in a bus to Kohala. References in the papers to *jathas* gathering there are entirely wrong. Apart from one lorry-load of Congressmen, who came to enquire as to what had happened, and some of the residents of Kohala who had gathered, nobody else came so far as I know. Kohala is a very small place with only a few inhabitants.

1. Interview to the press, Delhi, 23 June 1946. From *National Herald*, 24 June 1946.

At about 7.45, I started marching along the Srinagar Road. Others followed me, and when we came up to the police and the military, I pushed ahead in between them. So did others. Some of the soldiers had bayonets, some had rifles while the police had lathis. The police refrained from using their lathis except in trying to stop us. The bayonets were very near us sometimes, but actually there was no injury from them. In fact, when one bayonet was within a few inches of me Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, who was next to me, diverted it. He was arrested soon after.

On the whole, I have no complaint against the police or the military, who were placed in a difficult position. But when there are bayonets and loaded rifles, accidents can easily take place. The order to load rifles was given in our presence. I was not injured in any way, nor was anyone else, except as a result of pushing about and hustling. Altogether we must have gone about 250 yards, the later part of the journey being more or less of a procession with the police and the military joining in.

We then stopped again and had a talk with the District Magistrate. Right at the beginning we had asked him if we had been arrested. He said "no". We said that if we were not arrested, then we claimed the right to march on. Ultimately, the Magistrate took away the police and the military to Domel, 21 miles ahead. We had some kind of meal in the middle of the road and we motored to Domel, where we spent the night.

The next morning we were told that we were technically under arrest. Mr. Asaf Ali and Dewan Chaman Lal wanted to go to Srinagar, but they could do so only when special permission came from Srinagar late in the afternoon. At night, we were removed from Domel to Uri, 50 miles towards Srinagar. A military convoy accompanied us.

The Uri dak bungalow was converted into a kind of prison and was guarded by the military. There I remained for two days, when I received Maulana Sahib's telegram, demanding my presence here. I had no alternative but to obey. But, of course, it was understood that I would go back to Kashmir later. The fact that Sheikh Abdullah's trial had been postponed also made it easy for me to return.

It has been stated that a large number of *jathas* came. So far as I know, only a few odd people trickled in. As a matter of fact, I had discouraged *jathas* from coming. The whole traffic on the Jhelum Valley road had been completely stopped for two or three days.

About Kashmir, I do not wish to say anything more at present, but this incident does throw a significant light on conditions in the States. Why should I, or anyone else, be stopped from entering any State? So

far as I am concerned, I have the strongest objection to my being ordered to restrict my movements. I am not prepared to obey any order that I consider unreasonable anywhere and at any place, whether in a State, or in the rest of India. Nor do I consider myself an outsider in any State. The whole of India is my home, and I claim the right to go to any part of it.

I am not sorry for what has happened, if it makes the rulers and others think hard of the new conditions in India and the temper of its people. Today highnesses and excellencies do not count in people's eyes as such. The worth of a man is not judged by how much he takes, but how much he gives to the public in the shape of labour and service. Each one of us consumes the labour of other people. The question is how much we give to the common pool. If we take more than we can give, we are a burden and strain on society. Therefore, every ruler, as everyone else in India, must ask himself this question. Does he give more than he takes either in service or otherwise? Those who take more than they give cannot obviously be honoured members of society.

In the past for many of them it had all been a question of taking. In the future, a new balance has to be set in our social structure. So it is not merely a question of treaty rights, which are dead as a doornail, or dynastic rights, which have no value in people's eyes, but only a question of human rights. It is by that standard alone that all problems have to be considered and decided.

## 20. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
June 25, 1946

Dear Nan,

I hope you are resting in Khali and getting fit again. I am quite well in spite of reports to the contrary. As a matter of fact this little outing in Kashmir has cheered me up and my two days' stay in Uri was much occupied in making up for arrears of sleep.

My programme is uncertain still. But I imagine that we shall leave Delhi by the end of this week. I have to go to Kashmir again round about the 1st July. If I can manage it, I shall go to Allahabad a couple

1. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of days. I have not been there now for nearly three months. In Kashmir I intend staying for three or four days only. But of course this is subject to developments there.

I have just received the following cable :

Generalissimo and I greatly concerned regarding your safety and health as newspapers report you were detained and injured. Please inform us how you are and whether there is anything we can do for you. Where is Nan. Madame Chiang Kai-shek.

To this I am sending the following reply :

Thank you and Generalissimo for your kind inquiry. Am quite well. Nan is at present touring in Himalayas. Returning Lucknow beginning July. Hope you and Generalissimo well. We often think of you, Greetings and good wishes.

I wrote two or three letters to Indu from Kashmir. I hope she has got them. Quite a number of people want to accompany me during my next visit to Kashmir. But I fear this will be less exciting than the last one.

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 21. To Dewan Chaman Lal<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27 June 1946

My dear Chaman,

I am sorry I have missed you here. I am going away tonight to Allahabad. From there I shall have to go to Bombay soon. I wanted to talk to you about Kashmir. We have been discussing this matter in the Working Committee. The Committee, in accordance with their message to me at Uri, feel that they must assume responsibility for this matter now. They are taking a number of preliminary steps in this direction in the nature of correspondence etc. If necessary they will be followed up otherwise.

For the present I have been advised by them not to go to Kashmir because of the meetings of the Working Committee and A.I.C.C. in

1. J. N. Collection.

Bombay. It is probable that after the meetings Maulana Azad and I might go there together.

I should very much like you and Asaf to go to Kashmir for this trial. It is, of course, not merely for the trial but for other obvious reasons also. If nobody goes people there will feel that we have deserted them. They are rather down and out at the present time and require to be helped psychologically. So I hope you will go even for a short period; also Asaf. He is not likely to go to Bombay for the A.I.C.C. I imagine that this matter will be cleared up before very long in view of the various forces at work to this end. It is from this point of view also that I would like you and Asaf to go now, because your visit itself will help. You will tell Sheikh Abdullah that I am very sorry I could not be present there now, but I have refrained from going there because better hands are dealing with the matter and I couldn't easily go just at present because of the A.I.C.C. My mind is, however, full of Kashmir and we shall do our utmost.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 22. To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
13 July 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

Over two weeks ago, just before I left Delhi, you were good enough to send for me to discuss recent happenings in Kashmir. I told you then that I had promised to return to Kashmir and I intended to keep my promise. But I had no desire to precipitate matters and, therefore, I had postponed my visit for ten or twelve days. Meanwhile, I hope that the difficulties in the way of my going to Kashmir would be removed.

I have now waited for over two weeks. I do not know what the exact position is there now. Meanwhile, this question has assumed a larger significance and the Congress Working Committee is seized of it. You will appreciate that it is not merely a personal matter so far as I am concerned but affects our entire relation with the States. I am wholly

1. J. N. Collection.

unable to understand that the Kashmir Government should forcibly prevent me from entering Kashmir. Whether they are supported in this attitude by the Political Department or by the other ruling princes I do not know; but I can hardly conceive that they have acted in this manner without the advice and approval of the Political Department. In any event I have to keep my word to the people of Kashmir and I intend going there about the 23rd or 24th of this month. As you were interested in this matter and spoke to me about it, I think it right and proper to inform you of this. As soon as I have definitely fixed my date of departure I shall, of course, inform the Maharaja of Kashmir about it.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 23. To the Nawab of Bhopal<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
14 July 1946

Dear Nawab Sahib,

Thank you for your telegram congratulating me on my taking charge of the Congress presidentship.

As you must be interested in recent happenings in Kashmir and have taken part in some talks relating to them, I feel I should let you know that I intend going to Kashmir in about ten days' time. I returned from there last month on the definite understanding that I would go back. I had tried not to precipitate matters and I hoped that the difficulties and obstructions placed in my way would be removed. Nearly three weeks have passed by and I have to keep my promise.

This question, as you no doubt appreciate, has assumed a much wider significance than it possessed previously and the Congress Working Committee has taken charge of it. It is a matter which will undoubtedly affect the public attitude to the Indian States in general. I still hope that a satisfactory way out may be found.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Collection.

**24. To Asaf Ali<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
16 July 1946

My dear Asaf,

The postal and telegraph strike has rather isolated us and made it difficult to communicate with each other. I am sending this letter by messenger, that is through Krishna Kripalani who is going to take charge of the A.I.C.C. office in New Delhi. This, I believe, is situated opposite your house in Windsor Place.

I do not know if you have received the notice of the meeting of the Expert Committee we have appointed for the constituent assembly. This committee consists of you, Gopalaswami Ayyangar, K.T. Shah, D.R. Gadgil of Poona, Humayun Kabir, K.M. Munshi and me. We have fixed the 20th July for its first meeting. It will meet at 19 Windsor Place, New Delhi, at 2 p.m. Naturally I want you to be present at it and I have asked all members to come prepared with notes.

In spite of my desire to have you in Delhi for this meeting, I sent you a telegram suggesting that you might stay on in Srinagar for Sheikh Abdullah's case. I did this in consultation with Maulana because for the moment we saw no other way out. The telegram you sent me was not clear except that Baldev Sahay was going away. I do not know how matters stand now. It is exceedingly difficult now to get hold of any senior counsel. We cannot even get into touch with other persons by telegram. The time at our disposal is limited. Ultimately, seeing no other way out for the present, I have asked a young barrister here, whom you might perhaps know—Shanti Dhawan, to go to Srinagar. He is good in his own way, but obviously this is a stop-gap arrangement and he cannot take the place of a senior. I decided to send him as I could find no one else just at present and it was better to send him than no one at all. So far as the work is concerned, he will do it fairly well, both from the legal and political points of view. But he does not carry a big name and a reputation. I do not even know whether the case will be proceeded with or adjourned again. Anyway Dhawan can hold the fort till further developments or till other arrangements are made.

Of course if you had remained there or if you could go there that would be the ideal arrangement. But I can't press you to go backwards

1. J.N. Collection.

and forwards at the cost of your other work. That is for you to decide.

I do not know yet what the answer of the Kashmir Government is to the proposals put before them in Bombay by Gandhiji, Maulana and Patel. These proposals were in brief immediate unconditional removal of the ban on my entry, Sheikh Abdullah's release, and then consideration of constitutional issues on the basis of responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja. For the present only the first two count. I think an alternative suggestion was also made that in any event Sheikh Abdullah should be released indefinitely on some kind of bail on his own recognizance so that he might be able to go about and consult his colleagues in Kashmir and outside. Kak said that he would place these matters before the Maharaja and then let us have his reply. It appeared that probably there would be a removal of the ban on my entry but there was little chance of Abdullah being released before the trial.

Since then we have been waiting for an answer. I did not meet Kak and had no say in these talks. A suggestion was made that I might meet him, but I said that I better not do so.

Vallabhbhai wrote to the Viceroy also and sent a telegram to the Maharaja. The answer to this telegram was to the effect that the Maharaja had written to me. I have so far received no such letter. It is possible, of course, that it has been held up by the postal strike. So I do not know at all where matters stand. Provisionally I have intended going to Kashmir about the 24th of this month from Delhi. I informed the Viceroy and the Nawab of Bhopal of this, but I should like to know before I go what the Maharaja has written. I should like also to communicate with Maulana and Vallabhbhai. That is difficult so long as the postal strike continues.

My present programme is to go to Delhi by air on the 19th reaching there at about 7 p.m. that day. On the 20th, as I have said above, we hold our Expert Committee meeting. I shall stay there till I go to Kashmir unless something unforeseen occurs.

I have mentioned above that Shanti Dhawan is being sent by me to Srinagar. I am asking him to spend a day in Delhi to meet you and be posted up. He will reach Delhi on the 19th morning by train. I want him to proceed by air on the 20th morning to Pindi and thence by car, to Srinagar. I am writing a letter to Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad to make arrangements for his air journey as well as car journey from Pindi. Will you please see that Bakshi gets this letter and makes the necessary arrangements? His usual address is : C/o Pandit Brothers, Connaught Circus, New Delhi.



As I shall reach Delhi on the 19th evening I should like to meet you and Dhawan that same night before Dhawan leaves the next morning. I expect to stay with Ratan and Rajan at 18 Hardingc Avenue.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 25. To Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
16 July 1946

My dear Bakshi,

We have not yet had any definite answer from the Kashmir authorities, but the Maharaja sent a telegram to Sardar Patel three days ago to say that he had written to me directly. I have not received this letter yet, possibly because of the postal strike.

I have received a telegram from Jailal Kilam<sup>2</sup> stating that Baldev Sahay is away and he wants further instructions. It is exceedingly difficult to make any suitable arrangements in this short time, especially as the post and telegraph system is not working properly. I had hoped that Asaf Ali would stay in Srinagar, but apparently he has come back to Delhi. I do not know whether the case will be adjourned again or not. I can't get a senior lawyer from Bombay or elsewhere to come suddenly at a day's notice. I have, therefore, decided to send from here an able and smart young man, whom perhaps you remember as he was associated with the States People's Conference some years ago—Shanti Dhawan. Dhawan is a capable barrister and is Reader of Law here at the university. Both from the legal and political points of view he will be good. The only thing lacking is a famous name. I think he is good enough to carry on and hold the fort for the present till we make other and additional arrangements if necessary. So Dhawan will go from here via Delhi. He expects to reach Delhi on the 19th early morning by train. I have asked him to meet Asaf Ali and you so that both of you might post him up. I shall show him the papers I have here. I want him to leave by air for Pindi on the 20th morning and by car from Pindi to

1. J.N. Collection.

2. An advocate who later became a judge of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

Srinagar the same day. This will give him a clear day in Srinagar before the date fixed for the case. I have wired Jailal Kilam accordingly. Will you please make arrangements for him to go from Delhi by air to Pindi on the 20th morning and from Pindi to Srinagar? It will be desirable for someone to accompany him from Pindi, but this is for you to judge.

I intend reaching Delhi by air on the 19th evening at about 7 p.m. I shall probably stay at 18 Hardinge Avenuc. I want to meet you and Asaf Ali and Dhawan the same night. Please fix the place between you three. We can then give final instructions to Dhawan. It is my present intention to go to Kashmir after a few days in Delhi, but this will apparently depend on the Maharaja's letter and other developments. I have written on this subject to the Viceroy also.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 26. To the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
20 July 1946

Dear Maharaja Saheb,

I understand from Lord Wavell that you sent me a letter. I have not received this letter yet.

I write to inform you that I intend going to Srinagar on the 24th of this month. The immediate object of my visit is to advise my colleague, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, and his counsel in regard to his case. Further it is my desire, as it was last month on the occasion of my visit to Kashmir, to help in such ways as I can in lessening the tension which has existed in Kashmir for some time past, and if possible, to find a way out of the unfortunate situation that exists there. That, I take it, is the desire of all who are interested in the well-being of Kashmir and its people.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J. N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**27. Telegram to Mahatma Gandhi<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
20.7.1946

Received letter from Viceroy today about Kashmir. Thereupon decided go there twentyfourth on brief visit as Abdullah's trial beginning twenty-second. Informed Viceroy, Maharaja others my visit. Received your letter later. Consider change in programme not desirable now. Would early August suit you for Working Committee? Please wire suitable date place.

Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 83, N.M.M.L.

**28. Telegram to the Maharaja of Kashmir<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
20 July 1946

Am informed you sent me letter week ago but no letter yet received. Viceroy conveyed brief purport of letter to me today. I hope reach Srinagar on 24th evening on short visit.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 73, N.M.M.L.

**29. Telegram to the Nawab of Bhopal<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
20.7.46

Thank you for telegram. Am grateful for your sentiments and would certainly follow your advice if arrangements not already made and Sheikh

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 81, N.M.M.L.

Abdullah's trial not beginning. Finally decided about going after receiving Viceroy's letter on subject. Have no intention creating any difficulty. Shall endeavour to relieve tension with view to satisfactory solution.

Jawaharlal

### 30. To Vallabhbhai Patel<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
20 July 1946

My dear Vallabhbhai,

Thank you for your letter of the 19th which K.M. Munshi gave me. On arrival here this morning I received a letter from the Viceroy which was in answer to one<sup>2</sup> I had written to him about my proposed visit to Kashmir. He mentioned that the Maharaja had written to me. As a matter of fact I have not yet received the Maharaja's letter. It is only from the copy you have sent me that I have been able to read it.

The Viceroy wrote that if I was anxious to go to Kashmir I could go there and there would be no ban. He hoped that I would observe the laws of the State, etc. On receipt of this letter I finally decided to go to Kashmir on the 24th. I informed the Viceroy accordingly and have written and telegraphed to the Maharaja.

After making these arrangements I got a long telegram from the Nawab of Bhopal this evening pressing me not to go to Kashmir at present. I have sent him an equally long reply appreciating his sentiments but pointing out that in view of what the Viceroy had written to me and the arrangements had been made it was difficult for me to cancel my trip; further that I was going there on a peaceful mission and not for trouble. So I propose to go on the 24th morning. I expect to be there about four days. Then I shall hurry back to Allahabad, where I have some important work.

It is not my intention to raise any major issues in Kashmir at this stage. I shall also see Sheikh Abdullah and join in consultation about his defence. I shall also visit parts of the city and meet some people.

1. *Sardar Patel's Correspondence*, Vol. 1, pp. 10-11.

2. See *ante*, item 22.

I do not propose to hold public meetings and the like, though it may happen, of course, that crowds gather occasionally where I go.

I think we should fix a date for the meeting of the Working Committee. Bapu has suggested that a meeting should be held soon to consider the Kashmir matter. I have sent a telegram to him asking him what date and place would suit him early in August.

There is no question of Maulana going to Kashmir at present. I know nothing about it.

About Sikhs and the Punjab I am absolutely and thoroughly fed up. Colonel Gill has sent me a telegram asking me to meet their delegation. As a matter of fact, my Committee here meets all day and I have no time left for any other work. I have told him so and have suggested that he might send his representatives to you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### **31. Telegram to Abul Kalam Azad<sup>1</sup>**

22 July 1946

Kashmir visit fixed after reference Gandhiji, Viceroy.

Jawaharlal

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, p. 71, N.M.M.L.

### **32. Sheikh Abdullah's Statement in Court<sup>1</sup>**

I have pleaded not guilty to the charge of "sedition", which, according to jurists, is a crime against society, and I stand by whatever I have said or written in regard to the fundamental rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The reports of my speeches, though neither verbatim nor strictly accurate, are fairly correct. But when reliance is placed in the complaint

1. Jointly drafted by Jawaharlal and Asaf Ali. *The Tribune*, 7 August 1946.

and the charge on certain sentences, torn out of their context and not free from distortion, a wrong impression is likely to be produced. I owe it to yourself and the decencies of civilized controversy to state that I have maintained a clear and strict distinction between persons and politics, between individuals and the system of government which they operate, and I would not allow any undignified or indecent reference to or vulgar abuse of anyone anywhere. I have, however, all along sought the alteration of policies and measures and vital change in the system of government by legitimate and civilized means, for it is the birthright of man to shape and mould the law by which he must live.

I must also repudiate the charge that the violence to which the people are alleged to have resorted after my arrest resulted from my speeches, for realism alone would not permit me to contemplate a violent clash between the unarmed people and the armed might of the state. I called a total halt even to speeches after 16 May, and was proceeding to Delhi on 20 May for consultation with the responsible leaders of the All India States People's Conference. I was not allowed to proceed far and was arrested at Ghari. The news of my arrest naturally called forth a public protest, which was met with violent repression, and the bullet holes in Khanqah-i-Maulla bear silent testimony to it. Subsequently a chain of happenings took place, the bitter memory of which is fresh in everyone's mind. Even up to now fresh links are being forged in that dreadful chain of ruthless suppression and suffering. An elaborate attempt has been made by the prosecution to connect the events that happened after and in consequence of my arrest, which I am advised are irrelevant to the case, with my speeches. Thus, oddly enough, is sought to be justified the precipitate and uncalled for action of the Government in suddenly arresting me and hundreds of our colleagues, and letting the military loose on our people, in pursuance of a policy of frightfulness, resulting in death, injury, humiliation and harassment of many innocent men and women.

I am not interested in a personal defence and I would not have undertaken it if I had not felt that my trial for "sedition" is something far more than a personal charge against me. It is, in effect, a trial of the entire population of Jammu and Kashmir, even though some of them, being content with their transient personal interests or out of fear, may not be prepared to recognise or openly declare this. Moved by the extreme poverty, misery and lack of freedom and opportunity of the people of Jammu and Kashmir State, I and my colleagues of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, many of whom are behind prison bars or in exile today, have humbly sought to serve them during the past sixteen years. We have endeavoured to give faithful expression to

the growing consciousness among the people of their rights, aspirations and desire for freedom. This has attracted the penal and preventive provisions of law. Where law is not based on the will of the people, it can lend itself to the suppression of their aspirations. Such law has no moral validity even though it may be enforced for a while. There is a law higher than that, the law that represents the people's will and secures their wellbeing, and there is the tribunal of human conscience, which judges the rulers and the ruled alike by standards which do not change by the arbitrary will of the most powerful. To that law I gladly submit and that tribunal I shall face with confidence and without fear, leaving it to history and posterity to pronounce their verdict on the claims I and my colleagues have made not merely on behalf of the four million people of Jammu and Kashmir but also of the 93 million people of all the States in India. That claim has not been confined to the people of a particular race or religion or colour. It applies to all, for I hold that humanity as a whole is indivisible by such barriers and human rights must always prevail. The fundamental rights of all men and women to live and act as free human beings, to make laws and fashion their political, social and economic fabric, so that they may advance the cause of human freedom and progress, are inherent and cannot be denied though they may be suppressed for a while.

I hold that sovereignty resides in the people, and all relationships, political, social and economic, derive from the collective will of the people. The State and its head represent the constitutional centre of this sovereignty, the head of the State being the symbol of the authority with which the people may invest him for the realisation of their aspirations and the maintenance of their rights. The people, who constitute the state, must be the first charge on the resources and the primary concern of the State. In promoting the good of the people there must be no discrimination between one group and another, and all of them should have equal rights, obligations and opportunities. No artificial disability should be permitted to operate to the prejudice of any individual or group or community.

Through ages past Kashmir has been famed throughout the world for its entrancing beauty, the peaceful and intellectual pursuits of its people and the skill of its craftsmen. Nature has bountifully endowed this land and placed it as a lovely crown on the brow of India. If people from far off countries are attracted to it, what must be the feelings of those whose homeland it is and who have been nurtured in its bosom and who have drunk deep of its beauty and exhilarating air? And yet this land of fable and romance and abounding resources continues to suffer in the grip of appalling squalor, poverty and misery and, through

starvation and want, the bright eyes of its people have lost their lustre and their faces have become dull and lifeless. When we who are of Kashmir look at this strange paradox, we are moved to our innermost depths and an overwhelming desire seizes us to do our utmost to change this unhappy scene and make of Kashmir what nature designed it to be. It is this urge that has carried us forward, even though dangers and difficulties have faced us, and it is this urge that has gradually brought hope to our people and somewhat lightened their burden. Moved by this grim reality the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir drew up a plan for the future government of Kashmir, in which it embodied a charter of the people's rights and obligations, a plan of democratically organised responsible government with a constitutional head, and an economic structure of society, and called it a "New Kashmir". It represents the fundamental rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, and is in full consonance with the demands and policies of the rest of India and the All India States People's Conference, of which I have the honour to be Vice-President. I have participated in the formulation of the policy of that conference and I agree with it now as I have done in the past.

This conference has clearly laid down that the old treaties between the States and the British Government or its representatives are obsolete, and must end. That applies to all treaties including the Treaty of Amritsar, which has some special and unhappy features which make it a kind of sale deed of the territory and people of Kashmir. This treatment of a people as a commodity which can be transferred for hard cash has all along been deeply resented by the Kashmiris, whether Hindu, Sikh or Muslim. It hurts their national dignity. In practice, the peculiar nature of the Treaty of Amritsar has led to all kinds of discrimination against the Kashmiris, resulting in their treatment as some kind of a lower class.

The March announcement of the British Prime Minister affected the Indian States as well as the rest of India, and the people of the States felt that just as the people of India as a whole would decide their future, both internally and internationally, so also they must have the right to determine their own future within the States and in relation to the larger framework of a free India. That was not only a logical, reasonable and long-standing demand, but also it seemed to be the inevitable consequence of what the British Government had stated. The All India States People's Conference gave clear expression to this demand and looked forward to sharing, on behalf of the people of the States, in fashioning the future in cooperation with others.



It was clear that the old treaties with the States had to go. They represented something that had no relation to the modern world or to the India of today. They could not be reconciled with the inevitable changes in India and in the States. If this was clear to begin with, it became an accepted fact by the statement issued by the Cabinet delegation on 16 May last. That statement declared that paramountcy would end when the new constitution of free India came into being. It was an inevitable consequence that the old treaties and *sanads* and other engagements would go the way of paramountcy, and, the British Government being out of the picture, a new relationship would have to be negotiated between what is now known as British India and the States. The demand for the abrogation of the Amritsar Treaty was, in effect, disposed of by this clear decision of the Cabinet delegation. The future constitutional set-up in the State of Jammu and Kashmir cannot derive from the old source of relationship which was expiring and was bound to end soon. That set-up could only rest on the active will of the people of the State, conferring on the head of the State the title and authority drawn from the true and abiding source of sovereignty, that is, the people. The "Quit Kashmir" cry symbolised and gave concrete shape to this demand for the termination of a system of government which was in the process of dissolution all over India. That cry had nothing personal about it.

Meanwhile, developments in Kashmir had led to a crisis. A brief reference to the circumstances preceding the crisis is necessary here. Certain constitutional changes were introduced in 1944 which were glaringly inadequate and fell far short of the demand of the situation. Yet we agreed to work them in order to expedite and facilitate further change and, in particular, because we hoped that this would lead to contacts with the ruler and cooperation in bringing about essential changes. But our efforts ended in failure and these constitutional changes were reduced in practice to a futile shadow. The intolerable privations and grievances of the people of Jammu and Kashmir found no relief or remedy. A microscopic minority of variously graded *jagirdars* was, and is, allowed to exercise indefensible rights over large sections of the people who live in appalling poverty.

In Jammu province, especially in Chinani and Poonch, the *jagirdari* system presents a pathetic spectacle of degrading poverty and heartless exploitation. In recent years, Kashmir province has been, and is still being, parcelled out in *jagirs* which are granted to a small group of favourites. Thus, when land reform is considered everywhere an essential preliminary to progress, in this State a semi-feudal land system is actually being extended with all its attendant evils. As one goes up the higher valleys of the State, one is enchanted by the loveliness of moun-

tain and valley and, at the same time, struck dumb by the degradation of human beings living there. The army of the State is drawn almost entirely from a selected class of persons of Jammu province only. The people of Kashmir province whether Hindu or Muslim and even though they may live in Jammu province are completely debarred from entering the army. The Kashmiris may join, and have in fact joined and distinguished themselves in the British Indian army, but they are not eligible for the State army. In regard to the keeping of arms there is also an invidious distinction in favour of a selected class, the rest not being allowed this freedom. This discrimination between one set of people in the State and another, which has nothing to do with religion, debars the bulk of the population of Jammu and Kashmir from the possession of arms and is evidence of the suspicion and distrust of this vast proportion of the State's inhabitants. It is a humiliation which is felt deeply and which underlines the policy of the State in emphasising the inferiority of the great majority of the people.

The State has vast and rich natural resources but these have failed to relieve poverty and utter want. Indeed no effort is apparently made to develop these resources for the common good, and Kashmir continues, in a changing world, static and unchanging and steeped in misery. This can only be due to the failure of human agency and the autocratic system of administration. It can only be remedied by the representatives of the people undertaking the task of planning and development for the rapid betterment of the masses. No State can succeed in raising the standard of its people's life without educating and training them to pursue creative and productive activities. The percentage of literacy in the State is 6, the percentage of higher education is 1, and the average income per capita is Rs. 11 per annum. This by itself is an eloquent commentary on the system and structure of government to which the slogan "Quit Kashmir" is addressed.

Prime Ministers have been coming and going in rapid succession, though Kashmir remained static. It seemed almost certain that some malign fate held our fair country in its vicious grip and prevented it from coming out of the quagmire in which it was sinking. War came and convulsed the world, but Kashmir remained the same backwater where time seemed to be still and the clocks did not function except sometimes when they went backwards. The events of 1942 and 1943 shook the whole of India to its innermost depths and affected the people of Kashmir also powerfully. As elsewhere in India, political consciousness here rose to new heights and a sense of intolerable frustration seized the people. They could not remain where they were, they could no longer continue enduring their poverty and misery, which had increased under

the stress and strain of war conditions. And yet they could not do anything to change what they could not tolerate for the door of change was barred and bolted.

The present Prime Minister came to occupy the seat of authority and a new and disastrous policy of alienating the people was inaugurated. The position of the popular Minister was made intolerable and he found himself compelled to resign. Soon after, as a result of a secret intrigue, a member of the National Conference was won over by the State authorities and made a Minister overnight in contravention of the rules and procedure laid down by His Highness. This sudden development came as a great shock to the people and they began to feel that His Highness had been influenced by the small coterie that surrounded him to act in a manner which was not expected of the impartial head of the State.

The sole object of the Premier's policy was to crush the popular movement as represented by the National Conference presumably because this great organisation was the strongest and the loudest in viewing the people's demand for political and economic changes. We have the authority of the Premier himself for the statement that he started this policy immediately after taking office. To a newspaper correspondent he stated soon after the 20th May: "We have been preparing for it for eleven months and now we are ready to meet the challenge. There will be no more vacillation and no weak-kneed policy. We shall be ruthlessly firm and we make no apology about it." Strangely enough, the Premier had the clairvoyance to prepare for the effect of my speeches eleven months before they were delivered or "Quit Kashmir" was heard as a slogan. Even before those speeches, elaborate military preparations were made all over the valley and again on the Premier's authority three units of the army were flown to Kashmir. There was much planning ahead. The Governor of Kashmir has stated: "We planned ahead with the help of the police and military. The combined operation of the two alone, we knew, could help us to face the situation. The fusion has worked well and yielded good results. My faith in stern measures before the trouble spread has been justified."

It is this eleven months' preparation, and all that went with it, that is the direct cause of the happenings since the 20th May, not a few speeches delivered by anybody or some slogans shouted by a crowd. It is an ironical irrelevance to discuss the merits or demerits of a speech and to ignore the patent and admitted actions of the Kashmir State Administration which inevitably led, and were meant to lead, to recent events. The climax of the Prime Minister's "ruthlessness" was reached after the 20th May when men and women were dishonoured, human beings were made to crawl or hop on one leg along roads and sweep

them with their turbans, places of worship were desecrated, and an attempt was made to terrorise our whole people by methods of frightfulness. Eleven months preparation for the Premier's "ruthlessness", and all the careful thought that had gone towards the coordination of the military and the police, had borne fruit.

Some allegations have been made that "Quit Kashmir" and the demand for the abrogation of the Treaty of Amritsar had communal or Communist inspiration. This is a travesty of fact and I deny and repudiate these allegations. The National Conference is essentially a national organisation including in its fold all people who agree with its objective, and cooperating with the All India States People's Conference, with which it is affiliated. It stands in the all-India context for the independence and freedom of India. It stands also for social and economic changes to end privileges and to raise the masses.

It is a small matter whether I am imprisoned and tried and convicted. But it is no small matter that the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer poverty, humiliation and degradation. It has been no small matter what they have endured during the violent repression and horror of the past two months and more, and what they are enduring now. These very events have demonstrated the justice of our demand and of our cry "Quit Kashmir". For a system of government that can subsist only by pursuing such methods stands condemned. If my imprisonment and that of my colleagues serves the cause to which we have dedicated ourselves, then it will be well with us and we shall take pride in thus serving our people and the land of our forefathers.

Kashmir is dear to us because of its beauty and its past traditions which are common to all who inhabit this land. But it is the future that calls to us and for which we labour, a future that will be common heritage of all, and in which we as free men and women, linked organically with the rest of India, will build the new Kashmir of our dreams. Then only shall we be worthy of the land we dwell in.

### 33. The Ordeals of the Kashmir People<sup>1</sup>

After four brief days in Kashmir, my mind is full of impressions, painful and otherwise. I shall not say much about them now. To the authorities I have nothing to say, but I have a claim on the people, just as they have a claim on me.

1. Statement to the press on return from Kashmir on 29 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 30 July 1946.

I want to tell them that the ordeal they have gone through, hard and bitter as it has been, is often a necessary training for a people. The masses are trained not so much by books and speeches as by experience of life's hardships. So I hope, and indeed I am sure, that all that has happened will ultimately benefit the freedom movement in Kashmir and strengthen the people. It will strengthen them the more they adhere to right courses and high standards of conduct. During all that has happened, the people, as was inevitable, have acted sometimes rightly, sometimes wrongly. When mass action is involved, this mixture cannot be avoided, but a continuous effort should be made to emphasise right action and to avoid anything that is wrong. Our movement aims high and therefore it should maintain a strict standard of conduct and discipline. The more it does so the greater will be the strength of the people and the sooner their ultimate triumph. In particular, I should like them to remember that they should not indulge in personal or condemnatory slogans. Strength does not come from condemning others, even though they might err. That is a sign of weakness. Our thoughts and our actions should look to the future which we are trying to fashion, and our slogans should also be affirmative and strength-giving. Also I should like to emphasise that violence in a movement of this kind does little good. The more peaceful and disciplined they are the more they will raise themselves and influence others. I know well of the violence and the inhumanities that have been perpetrated on the people here but, as I have said above, I do not wish to say anything about it now. I am more concerned with what our own people do than what others do to them, because ultimately it is what we do that counts.

I was happy to meet Sheikh Abdullah, the gallant leader of Kashmir, again. I am going away, and I shall be burdened with many responsibilities, but my mind will often turn to this beautiful land of Kashmir, which is as much mine as it is yours, and whatever I can do to help the people of Kashmir I shall do.

In two and a half month's time elections for the State Assembly or the Praja Sabha are going to be held. I hope that full advantage will be taken of these elections and that the National Conference will contest them all over the State and demonstrate that the people are with it in its fight for freedom. They should prepare for these elections from now, and I am sure they will succeed. I suggest that first place be given to this activity from now onwards.

May it be well with Kashmir and its people in the days to come and may we all in Kashmir and the rest of India achieve our hearts' desire—freedom for the people in a free and independent India.

### 34. To Norman Cliff<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
6 August 1946

Dear Cliff,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 24th July. I am sorry I missed seeing you before you left India. But as you are coming back here again we are likely to meet. I went to Kashmir again and spent a few days there. Nothing very new has happened there and the trials of both Sheikh Abdullah and Kachru are going on. I am afraid that this Kashmir affair is not likely to be settled soon. Behind it, of course, lie not only the Political Department but also the Chamber of Princes. As you probably know, the Political Department of the Government of India was exceedingly annoyed with my visit to Faridkot.<sup>3</sup>

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Foreign editor of the *News Chronicle*.
3. Jawaharlal had visited Faridkot to study the situation created by the repressive policy of the State Government.

### 35. Note on Second Visit to Kashmir<sup>1</sup>

When I returned from Uri in Kashmir in June last I promised to go back. The message received by me from the Congress President also indicated that I would have to go back. I was anxious, therefore, to return as early as I could.

In the third week of July I wrote to the Viceroy and to the Nawab of Bhopal saying that I would probably pay a brief visit to Kashmir towards the end of the month. A few days later, when I reached

1. Submitted to the Congress Working Committee at Wardha on 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16, 1946-48, pp. 89-97, N.M.M.L.

Delhi, I received a letter from the Viceroy informing me that the ban on my visit had been removed and I could go to Kashmir if I wanted to do so. Subsequently I received a letter from the Maharaja of Kashmir also to the same effect. Thereupon I wrote to the Viceroy as well as to the Maharaja that I would go to Srinagar on the 24th on a brief visit.

On the 24th I went from Delhi reaching Srinagar the same evening. I was accompanied by Major-General Shah Nawaz, who was anxious to see Kashmir for the first time, and Col. Habibur Rahman,<sup>2</sup> who is himself a Kashmiri and who met me at Pindi. There was no untoward occurrence during the journey.

When I reached Srinagar, our car stopped at the Transport Company's office in the city square. Immediately it was surrounded by an excited crowd. I came out and was almost mobbed by friendly people who tried to embrace me. The police drove most of them away. I then proceeded standing on the footboard of the car. A few dozen persons followed the car shouting slogans. Repeatedly the police drove them away with lathis. Twice I got down from the footboard and tried to intervene when I saw this lathi display and people being arrested. On one occasion when I got down, a few persons surrounded me and a policeman and one member of the crowd slapped the policeman. I remonstrated with him and pulled him away. This incident was given considerable publicity in some Kashmir newspapers which are said to be subsidised by the Government, which stated that I had attacked the policeman. It was further stated that a complaint had been lodged against me, though I received no further intimation of it. There was no other incident of this type during my four days' stay in Srinagar which passed off peacefully.

The next day I attended Sheikh Abdullah's trial and later had a long interview with him. I had four such interviews with him, that is, one daily during my stay. No one was present during our interviews except occasionally one of our lawyers. I had long talks with Sheikh Abdullah and discussed the whole situation as well as the defence. He gave me a background of all that had happened and how all their repeated efforts to reach the Maharaja had been foiled by the Prime Minister, and how the Prime Minister had deliberately and openly worked to crush the national movement by encouraging the Muslim Conference and other sectional bodies. A year previously the National Conference had organised a magnificent welcome for the Maharaja on his return from the

2. Member of the I.N.A.; was with Subhas Bose at the time of his death. After partition he settled in Pakistan.

Middle East. In many other ways they had tried to win the goodwill of the Maharaja. But they could not reach him. Ultimately their Minister had also to resign and a sense of slow strangulation took hold of the people leading to a mood of despair. This again led to other events and the cry of "Quit Kashmir". He made it clear that at no time had there been any personal reference to the Maharaja. It referred to the autocratic rule in Kashmir. There is no doubt that there has been and is strong feeling among Kashmiris, both Hindus and Muslims, against what is called Dogra raj and the Dogra ruling class which has all manner of special privileges. Thus Kashmiris cannot enter the State army or keep arms. In the matter of grants of State land too the people of Kashmir proper suffer at the expense of others.

Sheikh Abdullah while making it clear that no personal affront was ever meant for the Maharaja was strongly against the whole system of Government prevailing there and more especially the Prime Minister and his clique.

During my stay in Srinagar I paid visits to certain places in the city where firing had taken place as also some mosques which had suffered injury. My visits were unannounced to avoid crowds. I also paid a visit to Anant Nag where also people had died owing to firing and it was said that there had been a great deal of repression and looting by the military. Two cases of rape were brought to my notice and I was told that recently some other cases had occurred in the neighbouring village. Wherever I went people were very excited and at the same time rather cowed down.

I met many neutral observers unconnected with politics. And the general impression I got from them was that the Kak regime was thoroughly corrupt and crooked and that there would be little peace in Kashmir so long as this continued. I avoided all public functions and did not make any statement to the press or otherwise except a brief statement<sup>2</sup> at the end of my stay. This statement was in the main an appeal to the people to stick to peaceful methods and avoid objectionable slogans. I do not remember hearing any personal slogans regarding the Maharaja or anyone else. The usual slogans I heard were those denouncing the Amritsar Treaty. Sometimes I heard "Dogra raj murdabad".<sup>3</sup>

I made no attempt to meet any of the high State officials but wherever I went minor State officials, magistrates and the police followed me. The police and military were also encamped near our house boat.

An old friend, Swami Sant Dev, was staying in the Maharaja's guest

2. See *ante*, pp. 410-411.

3. "Down with Dogra rule".



house. I went to see him. Later he sent word to me that he would like me to meet the Maharaja at his palace. I expressed my willingness to do so. But the meeting did not take place as, it was stated, the Maharaja was unwell.

Sheikh Abdullah's trial went on from day to day. I did not attend it after the first day. Asaf Ali was the senior counsel for the defence. It was obvious that a conviction was aimed at. In the course of the trial an interesting fact came out. According to the prosecution the damage done by the people in the city of Srinagar during the disturbances after Sheikh Abdullah's arrest amounted to a little over Rs. 7000/-. This was a trivial sum and consisted of a large number of small items. Some time afterwards, I believe, an official building was burnt down.

Dwarka Nath Kachru, who was arrested in June at the time of my first visit, was still an under-trial prisoner. I did not see him as he was kept far from Srinagar. When there was a chance of my seeing him on my way back, he was suddenly removed hand-cuffed. So far as I know his trial has not begun yet.

The National Conference people were carrying on some kind of token civil disobedience. This amounted to a weekly defiance of the ban on meetings when a few selected persons offered themselves for arrest after Friday prayers at the mosque. At the time of these arrests there were sometimes conflicts between the crowds in the mosque and the police. While I was in Srinagar on a Friday there was a biggish conflict of this kind which resulted in injury to a number of policemen as well as members of the public and a large number of arrests. I was of course not present when this took place.

There were various groups in the National Conference. Some were anxious to intensify the civil disobedience, others were inclined to stop it. The general feeling was that it should be carried on in this weekly manner, at any rate, till the end of Sheikh Abdullah's trial which was likely to take place within a fortnight. A complicated factor was the approach to elections for the State Assembly. After some discussion Sheikh Saheb and his colleagues decided to contest these elections which are going to take place in October next. They had no doubt whatever that if they were given the chance they would sweep the polls. Recent events have considerably reduced the influence of the Muslim Conference and added to the prestige of the National Conference. The difficulty, however, was that almost every one of their workers was in prison, either convicted or in detention. However, they decided to contest the elections anyhow. This led them to think that it would be desirable to call off the partial civil disobedience that was going on, so that they might prepare for the elections. On my way back I met Bakshi Ghulam

Mohammad, the acting president of the Kashmir National Conference, who had been out of Kashmir during this entire period since before Sheikh Abdullah's arrest. He told me that he had decided to call off, as president, civil disobedience as soon as Sheikh Sahib's trial was over. I agreed with him.

It is interesting to note that quite a number of Kashmiri Hindus have been arrested, convicted or detained, during these last two and a half months or more. As a rule every Hindu who has been convicted has received a heavier sentence than the Muslims, presumably to deter the Hindus to take part in the movement.

Just before my return I nominated a relief committee for the purpose of helping the sufferers from these disturbances and their dependents. I made it quite clear that this was entirely non-political and I tried to get into it some people who had no connection with politics. It was not easy to do so as people confessed to me that though they had every sympathy they were afraid of the Prime Minister's revenge. Still a committee was nominated. I have recently heard that the president of this committee has been arrested.

I have also been informed that Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, Sham-lal Kaul and some other Kashmiris, who have been doing publicity work for the National Conference from Lahore, are wanted by the Kashmir Government which has asked the Punjab Government for extradition. They have asked me for directions as to what they should do. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad is perfectly prepared to return to Kashmir. His only fear is that if he is arrested, immediately on return, he might not have the chance to call off civil disobedience formally and the wrong people may then control the situation. Before I returned from Srinagar I participated in the drawing up of a long statement which Sheikh Abdullah was presenting to the court. I did not see the final draft of the statement. But the general lines had been settled. In this he made it clear that he stood by the policy of the States People's Conference which meant responsible government under the aegis of the ruler. But he emphasized that sovereignty must reside in the people and they must have power to decide about the future of the State. He further said that Kashmir should be an autonomous part of the free Indian unit. About the Amritsar Treaty he said that the question had been settled officially by the Cabinet Mission's statement of May 16th which stated that paramountcy should end under the new constitution. With paramountcy must necessarily go the old treaties.

In his statement he deprecated personal and condemnatory slogans and cries. Indeed he pointed out that in one of his reported speeches

before his arrest he had said so. At that time the slogans were directed against Kak.

Sheikh Saheb's trial is likely to end within a week or so, though it is difficult to judge from here.

It is generally thought that British policy in Kashmir is aiming at the possession of some of the frontier areas. The British Government would not of course like a popular upheaval upsetting the present government there. At the same time they do not mind the Maharaja being frightened so that he might seek shelter with them and agree to their terms. The present Prime Minister has been known in the past to be a Residency man. He has completely isolated the Maharaja and is probably the most unpopular and hated man in Kashmir today. I did not come across a single person who had a good word for him. He has so managed things that it is difficult to bring about a change for the better. Most people told me that there would be no peace in Kashmir so long as Kak remains, and yet there was no obvious way of removing him, chiefly because hardly anyone was prepared to take his job. The only obvious alternative appeared to be some Muslim Leaguer from outside. Such a person would of course make matters worse. Yet it is clear that Kak cannot continue for very long.

I have never met the Maharaja. His reputation is of being a fairly decent man, sometimes moved by liberal impulses, but really not interested in public affairs at all. His chief interests: cooking, racing and building and demolishing houses. He is rather timid and keeps more aloof from people than most Indian rulers. Kak has apparently rather frightened him by his account of events and made him believe that it was only he, Kak, that saved the Maharaja from disaster. Probably the fact that has greatly irritated the Maharaja has been the report that personal and offensive slogans were shouted against him and the Maharani. Probably some such slogans were shouted by people in the crowd in the excitement of the disturbances. I do not think that any charge is made against any responsible person of having encouraged these slogans. Indeed prominent workers of the National Conference indignantly repudiated such slogans and often suggested that their enemies indulged in them to get them into trouble. This may be exaggerated. One slogan, however, which I heard on a few occasions in the streets of Srinagar was, as I have stated, "Dogra raj murdabad". The slogan is bad and I condemned it repeatedly but it does represent a strong feeling against the Dogras who have definitely behaved as a ruling race, just as the Muslims in Hyderabad.

I heard that all manner of false and exaggerated accounts of what I was reported to have said have been taken to the Maharaja. From this

I could judge how his mind must have been poisoned by false and tendentious reports. As a matter of fact I did not say anything offensive against him at any time, though when I was arrested I did say that he was a very foolish person and he would have to repent of what he had done. At the present moment I believe the Maharaja is a very unhappy person, trusting nobody, fearing everybody including Kak. Kak's policy has undoubtedly injured the Maharaja and his dynasty very greatly. It has encouraged all manner of wrong elements in Kashmir. Among those whom he has specially encouraged are the people of the Muslim Conference which is affiliated to the Muslim League and a kisan sabha started by some followers of M.N. Roy. These latter people, I was told, behaved like perfect goondas and hooligans in neighbouring villages. The last ten weeks have naturally put a great deal of powers in the hands of the military and the police and they have behaved as military and police behaved in many parts of India in August and September 1942. There has been corruption on a grand scale and the State has spent vast sums of money. Kashmir has suffered greatly also because one of its main sources of revenue, the tourist traffic, has dwindled down this year. The people generally are in a very bad state.

The Kashmiris are a very excitable people, timid and at the same time inclined to occasional violence, and politically rather immature. Having no proper press of their own they are influenced greatly by the Punjab Urdu press which, as is well known, is of the lowest type. The Muslim Urdu papers are all League papers and they have been carrying on, for some years past, a barrage against Sheikh Abdullah and the National Conference. The Frontier Province has a certain steadying effect, but the district of the N.W.F. Province which joins Kashmir is Hazara which is least influenced by the Khudai Khidmatgar movement. It is really the extension of the Punjab and suffers from Punjab's communalism. Thus Kashmir has continuously to face Muslim League propaganda and there is no doubt that during the last four years this has had some effect. Sheikh Abdullah has fought against this with a fair measure of success, but the influence of the League has grown. This was helped by the State policy also. This was one of the reasons which drove the National Conference people to extreme courses.

On the whole my four-day stay in Kashmir was quiet and uneventful. I purposely avoided saying or doing anything which might cause complications. Even after my return I said very little about conditions in Kashmir. The reason for this was because I felt that the Working Committee having in a way assumed responsibility, I must not create any further difficulty. During my stay no actual discourtesy was offered to me but I was surrounded by a kind of hostility and occasional re-

ports, from mutual acquaintances, of the Prime Minister's reaction to my visit indicated that he was very far from friendly. Accounts in some Kashmir papers about my visit were highly offensive. These papers are supposed to be in close touch with the Prime Minister. The editor of one of these papers is the Associated Press correspondent and most of the news from Kashmir comes through him.

I have referred above to the coming election in Kashmir. It is believed there that the Prime Minister wants to prevent anyhow the success of the National Conference at these elections, and he will therefore carry on an intensive policy of repression so as to prevent the National Conference from succeeding at the elections.

My return journey from Kashmir was uneventful. Shah Nawaz Khan returned with me. Asaf Ali naturally stayed on because of the trial. He will remain there so long as this trial lasts.

## ALWAR

### 1. To Seremal Bapna<sup>1</sup>

17 April 1946

Dear Sir Seremal,<sup>2</sup>

Yesterday I sent you a telegram in regard to the recent happenings<sup>3</sup> in Alwar State. I did so on receipt of a report from Khan Abdus Samad Khan<sup>4</sup> and Pandit Jainarain Vyas who, as you know, had paid a visit to Alwar and the Meo villages. I sent a similar telegram to His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar.

It is not our purpose or our custom to interfere in internal happenings in the States or elsewhere unless they are of a nature which demand urgent

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 567-571, N.M.M.L.

2. Prime Minister of Alwar State.

3. People of the villages of Rata Kalan, Rata Khurd and Basi Balan, who refused to pay arrears of tobacco excise duty, came into clash with the police on 2 April 1946. The District Magistrate called in the army to control the situation. According to an official statement two men died and a few were injured in the firing by the soldiers.

4. A leader of Baluchistan.

attention or unless they involve wider issues. The recent firing incident and what followed in Alwar State have drawn a great deal of attention and we decided to depute two of our senior-most and most responsible members to visit the places concerned and report. They saw you in this connection also. It is a matter of great surprise to me that many of the facts that you mentioned to them, especially in regard to the under-trial prisoners, were found by them to be incorrect. I can only come to the conclusion that you were yourself misinformed. The fact that under-trial prisoners are kept with heavy fetters on is disquieting and very abnormal. But what is really shocking is that such prisoners, even when being operated upon under chloroform or when their legs have been shattered, have to keep handcuffs on. You will, I am sure, agree with me that this kind of thing brings into discredit any administration. Further I understand that facilities for legal defence as well as for interviews are not forthcoming.

Before the question of trial and legal defence arises another question has priority and that is this: the whole background of the firing and how far this was justified. Obviously if the firing was unjustified the people who suffered from it, far from being proceeded against, should be treated entirely differently. The report that has been presented to me indicates that there was not sufficient justification for firing by the police. Further it shows clearly that present conditions in the Mco villages are highly unsatisfactory and the villagers are being terrorised by the police. Even Pandit Vyas and his colleagues who visited the villages were surrounded and threatened by the police. It seems to me that urgent steps should be taken to remedy this state of affairs. Further as I have suggested in my telegram an impartial inquiry is obviously indicated.

I am reluctant to give publicity to the report that has been presented to me till I find out what steps the State is taking in the matter. In view, however, of the public interest and enquiries I have to say something and I am issuing a brief press statement.<sup>4</sup>

You will, no doubt, realise that in view of the big changes that are impending in India, including the States, any incident that creates ill-will between the administration and the people is to be deprecated. We shall all have to face these big changes and to refashion the old order. This necessitates a large measure of cooperation if it is to be done peacefully and rapidly. So far as we are concerned we are prepared to do our utmost to induce the people of the States to give their cooperation in order to facilitate these changes peacefully. But obviously cooperation is

4. See the following item.

not one-sided, and if the State authorities carry on in the old authoritarian and repressive way the result is an increasing hostility on the part of the people.

There is another matter to which I should like to draw your attention. I have read with considerable surprise the correspondence relating to the removal from office of Lala Kashi Ram, president of the Municipal Board, Alwar. The reasons given for this in the letter of the Army Minister dated 11th April are trivial. Some of these reasons even do not stand scrutiny after the reply given by Lala Kashi Ram. I cannot conceive of any elected president of the municipal board being addressed in this way by any authority. The matter might have had no intrinsic importance by itself, but it is deeply significant of the way the Alwar administration has been carried on. I trust, therefore, that you will consider this matter afresh.

I am sending a copy of this letter to His Highness the Maharaja of Alwar who, I understand, is at Kasauli.<sup>5</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

5. Seremal Bapna replied on 20 April that firing took place as a last resort "only when the mob became violent and attacked the police"; the undertrial prisoners were "fettered or handcuffed purely as a temporary measure"; interviews had been permitted "except for the period when an attack by Meos was feared"; Lala Kashi Ram had been removed from the presidency of the Alwar Municipal Board because he had stirred up feelings against the government.

## 2. Firing on Meos<sup>1</sup>

Early in April there was some trouble in Alwar State resulting in firing by the armed police on a large number of Meo inhabitants of the State. This firing and subsequent happenings there created consternation in the State and drew public attention outside. The All India States People's Conference deputed two of their leading members, Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Pandit Jainarain Vyas, to visit and inquire into the matter. They have now returned and presented their report to me.

For the present I do not intend publishing this report, but I wish to say that it displays a disquieting state of affairs both in regard to the

1. Statement to the press, 18 April 1956. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 April 1946.

firing and subsequent developments. During their visit they saw the Prime Minister and other officials. It seems to me that an impartial inquiry is necessary, also that some urgent steps should be taken to improve the woeful condition not only of the under-trials but also of large numbers of Meos who are being harassed by the police.

Under-trials undergoing operation under chloroform were still kept in handcuffs; other under-trials had heavy fetters on. Facilities for defence and interviews were demanded. I do not wish at this stage to go deeply into the matter except to say that I have appealed to the Maharaja and the Prime Minister to have an impartial inquiry and give the necessary facilities.

### 3. To the Maharaja of Alwar<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23 April 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahab,

I have just received your letter of the 21st April on my return from Bhopal.<sup>2</sup> I went to Bhopal on the invitation of the ruler to discuss with him in his capacity as Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes certain matters connected with the States and the future constitution of India.

I welcome your writing to me on a subject which not only interests you but interests me also very much. I cannot say much in the course of this reply, but there are some points I should like to clear up. There is no question in my mind of treating the rulers of the States as superfluous and negligible or, as you say, with anything approaching contempt. I am fully aware of the part many of their ancestors have played in Indian history. Those traditions are a part of our national heritage. The present, however, is different from the past. Unless we fit in with the present we remain a backward nation. You will agree with me, I am sure, that the position of the Princes in India, in spite of the pomp and pageantry which have accompanied them, has not been

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 557-559, N.M.M.L.

2. Alluding to a remark made by Jawaharlal in a press interview on 13 April 1946, the Maharaja of Alwar wrote: "I cannot see how rulers of the States, except 15 or 20, can be regarded as superfluous and negligible in the Indian body politic so as to be pensioned off or otherwise treated with contempt... The princes have still to play a worthy part."



at all a dignified one under British rule. They have not only bowed to alien authority and sought favours from it but have relied upon its protection. I should imagine that any sensitive Indian would resent this treatment.

It is clear that India is going to be an independent nation. It is also clear that the basic structure of India will have to fit in with the tempo of the modern age, i.e., will have to be democratic. It is most unlikely that any marked difference can continue in political and economic matters between the people of the States and the people of the rest of India. It is agreed that India will be a federation of autonomous units. Obviously the units must have a certain uniformity and must be big enough to support a progressive administration. The States today vary enormously in size and quality and no general rule can be laid down for them. Some of them have dynasties, many of them are creations of the British, and many of them are not States at all but just estates given certain additional privileges.

Of these a certain number can become full units of the federation, many others can group themselves together to form a unit. Those small ones that remain over will have to attach themselves in some way or other to a unit. This general principle is accepted by most people. The working out of it will have to be done carefully.

No class or order can long survive on its past merits only, nor can it have importance if it relies on others for support. The Princes today and even more so tomorrow will have the doors of opportunities thrown open to them to play such part as they are capable of in the new India. If they can fit in with modern conditions, many of them may well become not only the leaders of their own people but leaders of India. If they have not got that capacity, then they will play no important part.

My reference during the course of my press interview was to a large number of very small States which cannot exist as units in the future because of their smallness. This has nothing to do with individual rulers who may be good or bad. In fact our approach has been a friendly one to all rulers as such, but we have to consider this question dispassionately apart from individuals. India, I believe, is at the threshold of big changes. I hope that the Princes will play an effective part in these changes, but they can only do it by lining themselves with the forward march of the country.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Seremal Bapna<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
24 April 1946

Dear Sir Seremal,

I thank you for your letter of the 20th April which I have just received. It is true that I have relied mainly on the report of Khan Abdus Samad Khan and Pandit Jainarain Vyas in regard to the recent happenings in Alwar State. Their visit was a brief one and, no doubt, a longer investigation would have brought out additional facts. But experienced observers, as they are, are competent to judge of a situation even during a relatively brief visit. You visited the place yourself soon after you learned of the firing. Presumably your visit was even briefer. As head of the Alwar administration you have to rely largely on reports received from your subordinates. That is the way with governments in most places and more particularly where there is no popular element in the administration. From considerable experience I know that these reports from subordinate police officials and others are often entirely erroneous. Inevitably they are the reports of one party to an occurrence trying to shield itself from the consequences of its actions. It is not a question of a government as such functioning and trying to avoid all extreme measures. It is usually a question of incompetent men dealing with the situation which they neither understand nor try to understand. Therefore it is seldom, if ever, possible to rely on such reports. Repeated departmental reports of this kind have been disbelieved by judicial authority. If this is so in what is called unfortunately British India, it is even more so in the more backward conditions prevailing in the Indian States.

I am not aware of any modern government which keeps under-trial prisoners in handcuffs and fetters even as a temporary measure. Under some sections of the criminal code fetters are allowed though not handcuffs, but it is usually considered that it is highly improper to put either handcuffs or fetters on any under-trial prisoner or even a convicted person except in very special cases involving breaches of jail discipline. If an officer were to tell me that he considered it advisable to keep fetters and handcuffs on a prisoner, I would tell him that I consider him unfit for his post. A man in prison is in close confinement and to put either handcuffs or fetters on him is to punish him severely before he has been

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 151, 1945-48, pp. 561-563, N.M.M.L.

convicted. These are primitive ways of dealing with prisoners which no modern prison administration can approve of. In cases like the one under consideration, which are obviously not of a criminal type, this is still more undesirable. Maulvi Abdul Qaddus<sup>2</sup> is a man who is looked upon as a leader by large numbers of people in the area concerned. His approach has mainly been a religious approach. It may have also been partly political. In either event to treat him as a dangerous criminal is to bring certain amount of discredit on the administration. It is not for me to suggest to you that trials of such persons are seldom profitable from the Government's point of view, but in any event it does seem to me very wrong to treat a man like him in the manner he has been treated.

The explanation given about the removal of Lala Kashi Ram from the office of the Municipal Board, Alwar, seems to me to be extraordinary. This explanation amounts to this: that Lala Kashi Ram was, in the opinion of the Government, trying to stir up feeling and create trouble. In other words Government did not like him or his activities. The instances mentioned in the official letter sent to Lala Kashi Ram were trivial in the extreme. I do not know how this kind of thing fits in with the declaration of the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in regard to civil liberties and the like. If elected members or office bearers of the municipality or of an assembly can be removed by a government at its own sweet will, then surely there is no value in any election and in any representative assembly.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Maulvi Abdul Qaddus, who was not a resident in Alwar State, was arrested on 31 March 1944 for persuading the villagers not to pay the arrears of tobacco excise duty.

## 5. Telegram to the Maharaja of Alwar<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
31.8.1946

Reports from reliable sources of torture and inhuman treatment of stayagrahis and other people in Alwar State have pained me deeply. Would

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 2, 1945-48, p. 46, N.M.M.L.

invite your urgent attention to this matter. At my request Pandit Hiralal Shastri<sup>2</sup> has gone to Alwar.

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (1899-1974); President, Jaipur Rajya Praja Mandal, 1941-43; General Secretary, Rajputana Regional Council of All India States People's Conference, 1945-46; member, Constituent Assembly; Chief Minister, Jaipur State, 1948-49; Chief Minister, Rajasthan, 1949-51; member, Lok Sabha, 1957-62.

## FARIDKOT

### 1. Last Chance for the Smaller States<sup>1</sup>

We of the Indian States People's Conference, representing a vast number of the States people, have deliberately followed a policy of friendly approach to the rulers wherever this was possible. Our aim has been and must be full responsible government for the people of the States in a free, integrated India. We have said that we mean no ill to the rulers as such, and so far as we are concerned, they may continue as constitutional heads.

Ultimately, it is obvious, the people of the States themselves will decide. Our friendly approach and policy have evoked no practical response so far, though there have been expressions of goodwill about the future. Goodwill is not enough. We stand on the threshold of changes, and they will come whether anybody wants them or not. It does make a difference, however, to our future as to whether they come peacefully and cooperatively or otherwise. The next few months may well decide this question in the States as well as in India as a whole.

We are told that though changes may come, we shall have to proceed slowly in the States. The States are so numerous and so various in India that it is difficult to lay down a hard and fast rule for all of them. But it is manifest that we cannot have stagnant pools all over India cut off from the rushing torrent of India's national life. Particular circumstances may well be considered and provided for, but there

1. Message to a meeting on "Faridkot Day", Simla, 8 May 1946. *National Herald*, 9 May 1946.

has to be a measure of uniformity and democratic basis and progress all over India.

So far as the smaller States are concerned, they are on their trial, and this is the last chance they are going to get. Unless they move rapidly and suffer a sea-change into something better, their day is ended. They have a chance immediately to group themselves where possible into efficient units of the Indian federation to come. It will be a privilege to join that federation for which certain essential qualifications will be necessary — qualifications of democracy and progressive government.

I do not wish to go into the details of what has happened and is happening in Faridkot,<sup>2</sup> but I do know that there has been a continuous hartal there for many days, and this itself shows the extreme resentment of the people of Faridkot with its doings. I offered to send the secretary of the States People's Conference, Dwarkanath Kachru, to inquire into the happenings in Faridkot. The chief minister informed me that he considered this unnecessary. I told him that if there was nothing to conceal, there was no reason why he should be afraid of this visit. Thereupon, he wired to me that if Dwarkanath Kachru came, he would be prevented from entering the State. Everyone can draw his own conclusions from this. My own conclusion is that the Faridkot State administration is thoroughly incompetent and out of date, and the sooner it goes the better. I do not know where the Maharaja is now and what he is doing when his so-called subjects are in turmoil, and are suffering under this administration. But whatever the Maharaja may or may not be doing, and whatever his chief minister may intend doing, events will march on, and we propose to march with them.

2. In April 1946, the Faridkot authorities beat up the people who had hoisted the national flag. Satyagrahis from neighbouring States carrying the national flag went to Faridkot. They were arrested at the border and tortured in jail. A hartal in protest against the repression was being observed in the State from 29 April 1946.

## 2. The Faridkot Incidents<sup>1</sup>

I have already issued public statements about recent events in Faridkot State. Further reports disclose shameful barbarities perpetrated by

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 10 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 11 May 1946.

State authorities. Mr. Dwarkanath Kachru, who was deputed by me for inquiry, was refused entry by State authorities. This state of affairs is intolerable and the All India States People's Conference will take up this matter and pursue it to its logical end. We cannot remain silent or distant when our people are treated in this way. I have sent the following telegram to the Chief Secretary of Faridkot State:

Have received reports of scandalous and barbarous behaviour of the authorities of Faridkot State. Your preventing Kachru's entry for inquiry into these circumstances cannot be tolerated. Full and impartial inquiry into recent events and State excesses must be held and those responsible for excesses must be punished. Unless orders restricting entry and civil liberties are withdrawn we shall have to defy them. If necessary, I shall personally visit Faridkot. Please send reply immediately.

Every person in the State, however highly placed he may be, must be brought to account and punished, if he is found guilty. Faridkot State has become a symbol of the degradation of some of the Indian States and their administrations. They will have to be purged completely, or wiped off, if they cannot behave better. We are living in an India on the verge of independence with a mighty people's movement everywhere, including the States, which will tolerate no suppression of or insult to human rights. The medieval ages are past and those who still think that they continue will have to be swept away.

### 3. The High Winds of Freedom<sup>1</sup>

Four days ago a meeting was held in Simla on Faridkot Day and I sent a message on the occasion. Since then, events have marched forward and the situation is much graver. Faridkot, from being just a backward State, where the authorities have misbehaved, as they often do in such places, has suddenly become a symbol of misrule and incompetence in the States.

It is truly significant that this should have happened in Faridkot at a time when the Cabinet Mission is sitting in Simla trying to hammer

1. Message to a meeting at Simla, 12 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 13 May 1946.

out the shape of independent India. We are told that the States, too, are going to change rapidly and fit into this picture. Is what is happening in Faridkot a prelude to the changes to come?

What has happened is bad enough, and will have to be fully investigated. But the fact that independent observers are not permitted to go there even to report on happenings shows the nature of administration that prevails there. Who is responsible for this—the Maharaja or his Chief Minister, or the Political Agent, or the Political Department of the Government of India? Somebody has got to be brought to book for this business.

I am rather glad that this matter has advanced so far, and has now become a symbol of the Indian States and what they are today. Let all of them know that they are going to be judged by this, and if they have any desire to save their reputation, they will have to act. Whether they act or not, others will act.

For on no account is this business going to be slurred over. It is not now just a question of stopping the daily attacks on individuals, or the release of a few persons in jail, or even the permission for people to go there. This, of course, will have to be done. It is a question now of a public inquiry and punishment to whomsoever it is due and reparations to those who have suffered.

The Chief Minister has informed me, in answer to my telegram, that I shall not be welcomed in Faridkot if I go there. I can quite believe that, so far as the State authorities are concerned. I do not seek their hospitality or their welcome. But when I consider it necessary, I shall go to Faridkot despite any order to the contrary.

For the moment, I am delaying this visit partly because of important work in Simla and partly because I wish to give a final chance, not only to Faridkot authorities and the Political Department, but also to the rulers generally to realise the gravity of the situation.

I am not going to the meeting in Simla today because I am occupied in other important work, but I am sending a person who is most fitted to carry the message of freedom anywhere, a gallant soldier of India, Major-General Shah Nawaz Khan. He will take this message from me and place it before the people of Simla.

Simla has long been the headquarters of the British Government in India and as such it has represented all the backward tendencies in India. The people who come here normally, whether Europeans or Indians, whether rulers or ruled, have been and are to a large extent still emblems of a disappearing age. But in Simla, as elsewhere in

India, the breath of new life can be felt, and behind that breath one can sense the high winds of freedom. Who will stop them when they blow and scatter away the cobwebs that have confined our minds and limbs so long?

#### 4. The Need for Popular Goodwill<sup>1</sup>

I have not come to Faridkot to create any trouble, but as a messenger of peace.<sup>2</sup> Small States like Faridkot cannot embark on such a repressive policy without the approval of the Resident and the Political Department. The main prop of the Indian States is the British. Once the British power is withdrawn, autocracy in the States will collapse. The future of the princely order depends entirely on the goodwill of the people.

In Delhi, which is so close to Faridkot and other Punjab States, negotiations are going on for the independence of India and for the transfer of power to the people. It is, therefore, strange that in the States there is such repression and utter lack of human rights. I cannot for a moment believe that the administrations in the States have so much power as to flout the wishes of the people but for the backing of the British.

In this connection, I refer to the declaration of the Nawab of Bhopal, Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes, on behalf of the rulers, promising reforms and democratisation. I think it was a mere routine gesture and made without any intention to give effect to the declaration.

The British are going most definitely. If Indian States, who depend for their existence on the British, do not move with the times then they will also go. If the people do not want them, they cannot exist. What happens in Indian States also affects those outside the States.

1. Speech at Faridkot, 27 May 1946. From *National Herald*, 28 May 1946.
2. On 27 May 1946, Jawaharlal visited Faridkot and talked for two hours with the Raja of Faridkot. As a result of his talks the State withdrew all restrictive orders and instituted an inquiry into the excesses committed against the satyagrahis.



## 5. The Role of the Praja Mandals<sup>1</sup>

I have just returned from Faridkot where, fortunately for all concerned, a satisfactory settlement was arrived at. I congratulate both the ruler and the Praja Mandal on this settlement, and I hope that it will be carried out in the spirit in which it was made. The time has gone by when State officials can indulge in autocratic and repressive behaviour.

During this interim period that we are passing through, the only way to carry on is through a large measure of cooperation between the rulers and the Praja Mandals, or other State people's organisations.

The Faridkot affair would never have assumed the importance and significance that it did but for the extreme incompetence of some of the State officials. The ruler was away at the time in Malaya. One wrong step leads to another and so there was a succession of wrong steps on the part of the State authorities. Fortunately, these have been remedied in so far as they could be remedied now, and the future should be faced in a different manner.

Where there are no properly elected assemblies to give expression to the people's wishes, it is only the Praja Mandals and the like that can do so. It becomes important, therefore, that the ruler should look upon these Praja Mandals as the representatives of the people and deal with them in a cooperative manner. On the part of the Praja Mandals, every effort will be made to meet the ruler half-way.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 27 May 1946. *National Herald*, 29 May 1946.

## 6. To the Raja of Faridkot<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
27 June 1946

Dear Raja Sahab,

You will remember that when we met you promised to have a public and impartial inquiry into the complaints against some of the police and other officials of your administration. You were good enough to assure me that this inquiry would be impartial and every facility would

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 53, 1946-48, p. 501, N.M.M.L.

be given. During the last few days I have received several reports about the course of this inquiry. I shall not go into this matter in any detail at present. I shall only say that from the various documents and papers which have been sent to me it appears that the inquiry is not a serious one at all and that the various complaints put in have been dismissed. In going through these papers a strong impression has been produced on my mind that it is not proposed to have a real inquiry. I am very sorry to feel this way after your assurance. I do hope that you will personally interest yourself in this matter and make the public feel that any person who misbehaves in your State has to suffer for it even though he might be a State official. Some of the complaints made have been very serious. I am sure that the reputation of your administration will be enhanced if a real inquiry takes place. Otherwise there will be little faith left in promises made.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Raja of Faridkot replied on 3 July 1946 that the Chief Justice of the State had completed his enquiry into the acts of officials. The Raja also enclosed a copy of the proceedings.

## HYDERABAD

### 1. India on the Move<sup>1</sup>

India is on the move and will soon be independent. The British power is going. Hyderabad must wake up quickly and march ahead to keep pace with the rest of India. The thought of Hyderabad always reminds me of the fact that the State Congress is still banned there. I hope that this ban will go soon and the people of Hyderabad will be able to carry on normal political life.

1. Message on the occasion of the Hyderabad State Maharashtra Congress, Poona, 15 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 May 1946.

## 2. To the Nawab of Chhatari<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26 June 1946

My dear Nawab Sahab,

Over two weeks ago I was misled by a press announcement which stated that Sir Mirza Ismail was taking charge from you of the Prime Minister-ship of Hyderabad State. So instead of writing to you, as I had intended, I wrote to him. The letter was really meant for the Prime Minister.

I am now repeating more or less what I said in my previous letter. This was written soon after the meeting of the general council of the All India States People's Conference in Delhi, and I wrote it in my capacity as president of this conference. The general council passed, among other resolutions, a resolution on Hyderabad. We expressed our great surprise and regret that even now, when the independence of India is in the air and everybody realises that the Indian States must undergo a far-reaching transformation, Hyderabad State should remain so terribly backward in regard to forms of administration and more particularly civil liberties.<sup>2</sup> You will remember that in January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes made a declaration in the Chamber affirming far-reaching civil liberties in the States. That declaration has had no effect whatever on the premier State of India. Indeed for many years past even the State Congress has been under ban. Inevitably this does not redound to the credit of Hyderabad State. I understand that there have been many conversations between the authorities of Hyderabad and some representatives of the State Congress in regard to this matter. But in spite of these conversations the ban continues.

I hope you will agree with me in realising that the continuation of the ban is not only an insult to the people of Hyderabad, but also a matter for grave discredit to the administration. Many big questions are going to arise soon, such as the election of delegates to the constituent assembly. Hyderabad is not going to jump out of India, nor can it remain a backward, feudal and autocratic island in the rest of India. Changes must come. If they are delayed, they come with bad grace and fail to produce the effect they should produce.

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 66, 1945-46, pp. 153-155, N.M.M.L.

2. In 1921 political meetings were banned, in 1929 they were allowed with previous permission, and in 1938 freedom of speech and association was further curtailed. The State Congress was declared an unlawful body from the time of its formation in 1938. The Hyderabad Assembly functioned with an official majority and with no powers of legislation.

You know that there has been a tremendous awakening of the people of the States all over India and they are no longer tolerant of many of the restrictions that have been placed upon them. No self-respecting organisation can submit to the stoppage of all activities because of a ban placed upon it. Were such a ban to continue, conflicts are likely to arise leading to complications and unfortunate consequences.

I trust, therefore, that you will be good enough to get the ban on the State Congress removed at a very early date and to permit the State Congress to function normally and fully. Such a gesture has been too long delayed already.<sup>3</sup>

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. On 3 July 1946, the ban on the State Congress was lifted.

### 3. Protest Against the Reforms in Hyderabad<sup>1</sup>

I and Sjt. K.A. Vaidya saw Panditji on 10 August at 1-0 p.m. at Bajajwadi. We told him that the Hyderabad Government had decided to introduce the reforms,<sup>2</sup> the synopsis of which had been sent to him earlier. He said that he had gone through the reforms scheme carefully and read all the papers sent by us, and expressed his opinion that

1. An account written on 28 August 1946 by Swami Ramananda Tirth, of the interview he and K.A. Vaidya, Secretary of the Central India States People's Conference had with Jawaharlal on 10 and 11 August 1946. A copy of this note is in Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund.
2. The Nizam's Government discarded territorial constituencies and extended representation to special interests, both economic and communal, which overweighed the legislature with vested interests. The Muslim minority of 12 per cent got an effective majority. A theory of monarchical domination was propounded. "The head of the state represents the people directly in his own person and his connection with them, therefore, is more natural and abiding than that of any passing elected representatives. He is both the supreme head of the state and the embodiment of the people's sovereignty." On 2 August 1946, the Standing Committee of the Hyderabad State Congress Conference rejected the reforms scheme and called upon the people to "make necessary sacrifices in the realisation of their cause."

the reforms were quite useless and in no case were acceptable. He said that there were two methods of protesting against them. First to boycott them and second to enter the council and then break them. But looking to all circumstances, the latter course did not seem to be advisable in our case. We told him that all the provincial conferences had passed resolutions boycotting the reforms. Other political bodies had also done the same. The Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen had passed a resolution declaring that the reforms were not acceptable, but it had decided to fight the elections and enter the Assembly and then to break it. The ground of its non-acceptance was that the assurances given to the Ittehad-ul-Mussalmeen were not fulfilled. We then showed him the draft resolution prepared by the provisional executive committee of the States Congress to be placed for the consideration of the standing council which was meeting on 16 and 17 August. He made certain corrections and suggested that a couple of sentences might be added emphasising the point that the issue was non-communal and that our stand was wholly national and purely political in the interest of all the communities in the State. He then told us that we should see him after our interview with Mahatmaji. This interview lasted for about half an hour.

We again met him on 11 August at 1-00 p.m. as we had seen Mahatmaji that morning. We told him that we had seen Mahatmaji and that he had expressed his view that the reforms should be resisted and all necessary action must be taken to implement our resolution of boycotting the reforms. Panditji said that he had a cursory talk with Mahatmaji in the afternoon of 10 August and asked us to see him in the evening as he would like to have a detailed talk with us.

We saw him again at 7-30 p.m. when he told us that he had a talk with Mahatmaji and referred to our talk with him, and said that we should take necessary action in the matter. He expressed his view that all such methods should be adopted by which the Government would be compelled to withdraw the reforms scheme. He said there was nothing wrong if we took up the larger issue of responsible government when we told him that our negative demand was that the reforms should be scrapped and the positive side was that nothing short of responsible government was acceptable to the people. We showed him our plan of action which he approved generally. He advised us that we should make a definite demand of the withdrawal of reforms in our resolution. He dropped a hint that the language should not unnecessarily be strong and too many adjectives should not be used. He was quite cheerful when we left him and wished us success in our efforts.

#### 4. The Inadequacy of the Reforms<sup>1</sup>

The Congress policy towards the States is that they are to be an integral part of India. There being hundreds of States of all sizes, it is impossible to treat them all alike. Obviously, only the major States are big enough to form units of a federation or union. The others must either form units or be absorbed in some existing unit like a province. A State which forms a unit will have exactly the same measure of autonomy as a province. There should be no difference in their status.

We have deliberately tried to make a friendly approach to the rulers so as to find a way out by peaceful and cooperative methods. It is obvious that there can be no autocracy in the future anywhere in India and the people of the States, as the people of the rest of India, must have the final authority. There has been some response from a few of the rulers but, on the whole, this has been feeble. In some notable cases, attempts have even been made to put the clock back.

In the premier state of India, namely Hyderabad, a new scheme of so-called reforms is being introduced. This is fantastic and absurd and is evidently meant to perpetuate the backward and feudal character of the regime. Hyderabad is the most feudal and reactionary of the States in India. These reforms have already been rejected by the people's organisation and the sooner they are withdrawn the better, because they will only create trouble. The only correct line of approach there and elsewhere is towards a responsible government and democracy.

In another major State—Kashmir—there is at present a struggle going on between the people and the Government, and the people's movement has been sought to be repressed by fierce repression.

In an important southern State,<sup>2</sup> however, the Maharaja has recently made a statement, which it is so pleasant to read after so many assertions elsewhere of autocracy and the ruler's privileges. The Maharaja has accepted the objective of responsible government for the State and I hope he will soon give effect to it.

Nowhere else in the world is there anything like this system of Indian States. Even now, they are largely dependent upon the Political Department of the Government of India. With the removal of the British authority from India, the whole basis of the present system goes

1. Interview to the press, Wardha, 12 August 1946. From *The Hindu*, 15 August 1946.

2. Cochin; see *post* page 438, footnote 2.

and, inevitably, the people of the States will have their say as to their future. The people's organisation has already made it clear that they want full democratic government within the union of India. It is also evident that the same measure of democratic liberty must prevail in both princely States and the provinces and fundamental rights will be common to all the federating units of the Indian union. There may be minor differences in regard to the internal administrative arrangements, but there is bound to be a tendency towards uniformity and the same standards of administration and personal liberty.

The Congress as well as the States people's organisation have said that the rulers may remain as constitutional heads, but that their people must have full responsible government. That is to say that sovereignty must rest with the people. It is for the people to decide the inner constitution of the State and the form of administration. In the proposed constituent assembly, which is going to draw up the constitution of the Indian union, the States, like the provinces, should be represented by elected persons and not by nominees of the rulers.

## 5. Resolution on Hyderabad<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee have considered the proposed constitutional changes which have been recently announced in Hyderabad State. These proposals are wrongly conceived, limited in scope and full of checks and reservations, and are apparently intended not to introduce any measure of freedom for the people but to preserve privilege and vested interest and perpetuate the feudal conditions that prevail in the State. They would have been objectionable at any time, as the principles on which they are based are opposed to all canons of justice and democracy. At a time when India is on the eve of independence, they are wholly out of keeping with the minimum demands of the situation and cannot be fitted in with any constitution for a free India which may be evolved in the near future. The Committee regret that the premier State of India should be backward politically, economically

1. Drafted by Jawaharlal, Wardha, 13 August 1946, A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946, p. 157, N.M.M.L.

and in regard to essential civil liberties, and averse to progressive change when all the States in India are expected to advance rapidly towards responsible government as autonomous parts of independent India. The Committee are therefore of opinion that these proposed changes will, if given effect to, retard progress towards freedom, and the new reforms should be withdrawn and replaced by a constitution drawn up with the consent and approval of the people.

The Committee approve of the decision of the executive of the State Congress to reject this new scheme and not to participate in it.

## COCHIN

### 1. To the Maharaja of Cochin<sup>1</sup>

August 16, 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahab,

I wish to convey to you my greetings and congratulations on the declaration you made recently about responsible government and other matters connected with your State.<sup>2</sup> It was a brave declaration which, I am sure, will be a lead for many other States.

I notice that it has been criticised by some people. That criticism is of no account and represents only the lack of foresight in others. I hope that you will implement your declaration as soon as possible so that you and your people can march together cooperatively to freedom.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

A.I.S.P.C. File No. 40/1941-48, p. 119. N.M.M.L.

On 29 July 1946, the Maharaja of Cochin, retaining for himself no status other than what might be granted by the free vote of the adult population, transferred over 90 per cent of the departments to ministerial control and introduced the system of cabinet discussion.



## 2. No Half-Way Houses to Popular Sovereignty<sup>1</sup>

Some days ago I read a declaration made by the Maharaja of Cochin on responsible government in his State. The whole outlook and approach of this declaration was in pleasant contrast to what one usually gets from the rulers and authorities in the States and I should like to congratulate the Maharaja on it. I hope that he will give full effect to it as early as possible and thus give Cochin the pride of place in the Indian States. In that work, I am sure, he will have the full co-operation of the State people's organisation. Cochin is eminently suited for this changeover to a democratic form of government because of the high standard of education there.

It surprises me that even in these dynamic times so many rulers of States are still probing about cautiously and wondering what they should do. Events are marching to their pre-destined end and no one can stop that march. We may put ourselves in line with it or try to hinder it for a while. It is time that the rulers of Indian States realised fully this situation and the pace of events, both from the point of view of their State and the country, and also from their own point of view. Details of constitutions are for lawyers to make but the fundamental basis of a constitution for a State or for the whole of India can only be one; that power and responsibility and ultimate sovereignty must rest with the people. If this is recognised the rest offers little difficulty. There are no half-way houses to this recognition.

In sharp contrast to this declaration of the Cochin Maharaja is the recent announcement of what are called reforms in Hyderabad State. The Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution on this subject and approved of the rejection of this scheme which is a denial of freedom and a perpetuation of the autocratic government. Hyderabad State unfortunately still lives in a world of make-believe, cut off from the reality of today. It was right, therefore, that the Working Committee gave forcible utterance to its views on this subject. The whole of India is our home and India is on the eve of freedom. Indian freedom is indivisible. We cannot have freedom in one part and lack of freedom in another.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 17 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 August 1946.

BIKANER

**1. To the Maharaja of Bikaner<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
23 July 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahab,

Thank you for your letter of 22nd July which has just been handed to me. I would gladly avail myself of your kind invitation to visit Bikaner, but I am afraid I am wholly unable to find the time for such a visit during the next month or so. I am grateful to you for your suggestion that Mr. Bhatt<sup>2</sup> and Pandit Hiralal Shastri might visit Bikaner early in August. I shall communicate with them and inform them of this.

Your second letter of the same date raises important issues about which I should like to write to you at some leisure. The question does not rest with me. I should also like to consult some of my colleagues so that I can convey to you their views also.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 24, 1946-48, p. 406, N.M.M.L.

2. Gokulbhai Bhatt (b. 1898); president, Rajasthan Lok Parishad, 1946-48; Chief Minister, Sirohi State, 1947-49; president, Rajasthan Pradesh Congress, 1949-50; member, Constituent Assembly.

**2. To the Maharaja of Bikaner<sup>1</sup>**

Bombay  
August 15, 1946

Dear Maharaja Sahab,

Some time ago you sent me a note on the flag question in the States. I sent a brief reply then. I have now consulted some of my colleagues and I hasten to write to you what their reactions are. I have not got

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

with me at present the various papers relating to this matter, including the previous resolutions of the Congress Working Committee dealing with the Mysore settlement.<sup>2</sup> If necessary, I shall write to you again after reference to these papers. But in order to avoid delay I have thought it desirable to write immediately.

Since the Mysore settlement in regard to the flag was arrived at much has happened in the country and the position today has advanced considerably. So far as I know there has been no trouble over the national flag in any State recently, apart from Bikaner. Such matters usually adjust themselves in a changing situation with mutual tact and forbearance. We have to deal today with a popular awakening all over India, including the States. This awakening is a welcome sign as it denotes a new vitality in the Indian people. Sometimes that vitality functions in a wrong way and, if so, we should try to check it. But in checking it, it will be a pity if we try to smother that vitality itself which carries with it the promise of a new India in the near future.

So far as we are concerned, we want to avoid every conflict over the flag question. Indeed we would like the flag to be considered as above controversy and conflict and, where it is not welcome, it should not be imposed. That has been our attitude throughout, but in moments of popular excitement complications often occur. We have made it repeatedly clear that the national flag must not come into conflict with any State flag and in any use of the national flag no affront is intended for a State flag. As stated in the note that you have sent the national flag is in a sense opposed to the use of the Union Jack in India, because the latter represents British domination over Indians. Even with the Union Jack we have no quarrel in other places where it does not represent the suppression of any people. As a symbol of Great Britain and the British people, we respect the Union Jack as we respect other national symbols. But as a symbol of colonial domination we object to it. In India, inevitably, it is a symbol of our subjection and hence we object to it.

The use of a flag may be decided by a superior authority but ultimately it is something bound up with the urges and desires of a people. The difficulty at present is that the people of many of the States have no responsibility or power in their States and hence the State flag does not represent to them that freedom which they cherish. Once the State itself becomes a free State within the larger freedom of India,

2. The settlement, dated 15 September 1939, stated that "care will be taken not to do anything that might imply any disrespect to the state flag by the State Congress or to the national flag by the state authorities."

the reactions of the people of the State towards that State flag will immediately undergo a change. It will become a symbol of their own freedom and individuality as a State. Ultimately a people's sentiments cannot be created by compulsion from above but rather by producing circumstances and an environment which leads to the growth of these sentiments.

I have indicated to you above the viewpoint with which we approached this question and I feel sure that you appreciate it. Coming more to the point, I want to tell you that in order to avoid any misunderstanding or conflict, we are prepared to abide by the Mysore settlement in regard to the flag. This settlement stated that on ceremonial occasions the national flag and the flag of the State should be flown together, but on party occasions the national flag alone need be flown. It might be a little difficult occasionally to determine what is a ceremonial occasion. But on the whole it gives a clear enough direction and, with goodwill on both sides and a desire to accommodate each other, there is no reason that there should be any misunderstanding or conflict on this issue.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

KALAT

### 1. To the Khan of Kalat<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
16 June 1946

Dear Sir Mir Ahmad Yar Khan,<sup>2</sup>

When I had the pleasure of meeting you in Delhi some months back, you were good enough to discuss various matters concerning the future of Kalat State. These questions are likely to assume some prominence in view of developments in India as a whole and in the States in particular in connection with the proposed Constituent Assembly. Some

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1904); ruler of Kalat, the third largest State in India.

aspects of this question were considered by the General Council of the All India States People's Conference which met recently in Delhi. We passed a resolution disapproving of the reported move of the British Government to separate Kalat from India. This can only mean the retention of a British imperialist foothold on the frontiers of India. It cannot lead to any greater freedom or development of Kalat State, as you and all of us desire.

I am writing to you, however, more particularly in regard to the ban which was imposed on the Kalat State National Party in 1939 and which continues today. I understand also that public meetings are not allowed and the normal civil liberties are very restricted. You will agree with me, I am sure, that in view of developments in India such a ban is very much out of date and draws unfavourable attention to the internal administration of Kalat State. In January last the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes declared in the Chamber on behalf of the Princes in India that fundamental rights and civil liberties would be fully honoured in all the States. Since this declaration some change has taken place in various States. Now with big developments impending all over India, including the States, it becomes even more necessary than before that restrictions on civil liberties be removed. Any such action would bring the ruler more in line with his people and the two together can then co-operatively consider future changes. I trust, therefore, that you will be good enough to remove this ban on the Kalat State National Party and allow it to function normally; also that restrictions on public meetings etc., will be removed.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. To Khan Abdus Samad Khan<sup>1</sup>

Bombay  
10 July 1946

My dear Khan Saheb,

I have your letter of July 10th. In regard to your question about the leased lands in Baluchistan I should like to make the position of the

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-15/1946 (Part I), pp. 3-5, N.M.M.L.

Congress quite clear.<sup>2</sup> There can be no question of the transfer of these lands to the Kalat State in existing circumstances or, as far as I can see, in the future. We are not going to accept on any account any attempt to bring about such a deal. Ultimately the decision about these areas must rest with the people of those areas, and it is highly improper for the British Government or any of their representatives to suggest a deal of this kind as if the people there were commodities which could be transferred without any reference to them. Because these areas are frontier areas their importance is heightened from many additional points of view, including that of defence. Thus I cannot conceive of such a transfer being made without raising a major issue and rousing resistance from us.

So far as Kalat or any other State is concerned we do not accept, nor are we going to agree to, any kind of independence for that State. The British Government have announced that, when the constitution has been framed and given effect to, paramountcy will cease to exist.<sup>3</sup> That does not mean that Kalat or any State will become independent. It simply means that during this intervening period of a year or so new arrangements have to be devised for the inclusion of Kalat and other States within the Indian union as units of the federation. It is inconceivable to me that any State will become independent and outside the limits of the union. The fact that Kalat is a border State adds to its importance from our point of view as frontier areas are always strategic areas. An independent India cannot permit foreign forces and foreign footholds, such as Kalat might afford, near its own territories.

Whatever the constitution we adopt finally might be, there is going to be a strong though limited union government and certain fundamental rights and common features of administration in all the component units such as provinces or States. Having regard to all these facts, there is absolutely no need for any apprehension on the part of anyone that the leased lands will be transferred to Kalat which will become independent.

2. The Khan of Kalat had requested the Government to restore the leased areas of Quetta and other districts in Baluchistan to the Kalat State in view of the intended withdrawal of British power from India.
3. The Cabinet Mission had pointed out that the British Government could not and would not, in any circumstances, transfer paramountcy to an Indian Government. The British Government would cease to exercise powers of paramountcy when an independent government came into being in British India. The States would then be free to enter into a federal relationship or make political arrangements with the new government or among themselves.

I am glad to learn that you intend standing for election to the constituent assembly from Baluchistan. I can imagine of no better representative of Baluchistan and I hope that the electors, both the Sardars and the members of the Quetta municipal committee, will give you their full support.

I might add that the constituent assembly will elect an advisory committee to deal with minority problems, tribal areas, etc. We should like to have a representative of the tribal areas of Baluchistan in this committee, and we shall see to it that he is elected. In the choice of this representative we shall naturally be guided by your recommendation from among those Sardars and others who support you.

Wishing you all success,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## OTHER STATES

### 1. Need for Popular Governments<sup>1</sup>

I send my greetings and good wishes to the annual conference of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha. I am sorry I cannot attend it as I am heavily occupied elsewhere with important issues affecting the whole country. We are on the eve of big and vital changes which will influence the future of India including the States. We have, therefore, to be clear about our future policy and objective and to build up our strength, for without strength based on the people, every policy is ineffective.

Our objective in the States is responsible government in the State as an integral part of a free India. There can be no variation or change

1. Message to the annual conference of the Gwalior Rajya Sarvajanik Sabha, Gwalior, 12 March 1946. *National Herald*, 13 March 1946.

in that objective. That responsible government must be based on the people so that it may reflect the people's wishes.

In view of the fact that important discussions are likely to take place soon regarding the future of India, it is not desirable to start satyagraha or civil disobedience at this stage. But it must be remembered that unless there is sanction of the people's organised strength behind a movement it cannot control these changes. It must also be remembered that we may have to face a great struggle for the freedom of India in the future. For this, and for all developments in the future, we must be prepared and be ready, by strengthening our organisation and keeping it in touch with this all-India movement.

Some time back the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes declared in the Chamber on behalf of the princes that they were going to guarantee fundamental rights and an important and efficient judiciary. That declaration did not go far enough as regards the establishment of a people's responsible government and we have made it clear that the only proper solution is full responsible government. Nevertheless we welcomed the declaration in regard to the guarantee of fundamental rights.

I am sorry to learn that this declaration has not yet been given effect to in many of the States. This has resulted in resentment in many places and a belief that the princes' declarations have no reality behind them. We must have the declaration acted upon in its entirety.

## **2. Rise Above Petty Squabbles<sup>1</sup>**

I appeal to the people of India to rise above petty squabbles and internal bickerings, which do not benefit us, but our enemies, and focus their entire attention on higher and more vital issues which are at stake. The Indian people are advancing towards independence, and nothing can stop them.

The curtain is very soon likely to go up on the final act of the great drama of our struggle for independence. We are approaching the end of a long story, and complications are bound to arise. But we must all

1. Speech at Bhopal, 23 April 1946. From *National Herald*, 24 April 1946.



realise that a new chapter is about to begin soon, and we must understand and be prepared for the new India.

Vital negotiations are now in progress in Delhi and no one can predict what new developments might take place in the next few days or weeks.

In whatever part of India we may live, whether in the States or elsewhere, the change is bound to affect every one of us. Ultimately our fortunes are closely interwoven. An important aspect of the present situation relates to the Indian States which cannot be kept out of the general picture.

In the past India's prestige had been very high among the front-rank nations. In the period of slavery which followed, India's stock went down, but now its stature is rising and the eyes of the world are on us. We are on the threshold of independence. Once independence is achieved our country is bound to make progress in all directions, for we will then be able to tackle properly our first and foremost task of removing the poverty and misery of the masses and of throwing open the door of development to every Indian. We cannot tackle these vital tasks so long as we are in fetters.

What is now going on in Delhi should not be considered the affair of a few top-ranking individuals. It is the result of the national upsurge. The people are advancing towards independence and nothing can stop them. Truly speaking, this new spirit of national awakening pervades not only India, but all Asiatic countries.

### 3. Death In Prison at Jaisalmer<sup>1</sup>

Early in April 1946 news was received of the death in prison in Jaisalmer of Mr. Sagarmal Gopa<sup>2</sup>, a well-known public worker there. It was stated that Mr. Gopa had committed suicide by setting fire to his clothing. This was an extraordinary statement to make about a prisoner in jail.

We have inquired into this matter and I have before me a report by Mr. Jainarain Vyas. I have also interviewed the brothers of Sagarmal. The facts which this inquiry reveals are tragic in the extreme.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 28 April 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 29 April 1946.
2. (1900-1946); imprisoned for making seditious speeches in May 1941.

It is clear that Sagarmal was burned to death on April 3. It is exceedingly doubtful that this was self-inflicted. Even if it was so, it indicates the torture he had undergone which left him no choice but to end his life in this horrible manner.

Sagarmal was arrested in May 1941 and tried and convicted under Section 124/A. It is not yet known what the period of his imprisonment was. He was confined in a solitary cell for a year and made to work as a sweeper for another year.

Jaisalmer is one of the most backward and out-of-the-way States of Rajputana and news from it travels slowly. Still news of his ill-treatment appeared in the press. Thereupon a statement was issued by the authorities, under the signature of Sagarmal himself, denying ill-treatment.

Mr. Jainarain Vyas inquired into this matter and managed to get letters from Sagarmal himself which indicated that he had been forced under extreme pressure to issue the statement, and that in fact he was being subjected to all manner of atrocities.

He pointed out that the Political Agent of Western Rajputana States, Maj. N.S. Alighton, had written to him as follows on March 16, 1941: "The Dewan has informed me that the State has no case against you and you need not anticipate ill-treatment from the Darbar if you visit Jaisalmer. I have already informed you verbally of this".

Nevertheless, he was arrested and sentenced and later he said he was tortured into writing a contradiction of the statement about his ill-treatment. He was so afraid that he added to his letter: "Kindly do not publish the statement in this letter; otherwise I will again be tortured." Throughout his stay in prison he had bar fetters.

Early this year, Mr. Jainarain Vyas wrote to the Political Agent about the ill-treatment of Sagarmal and asked for an interview as well as a copy of the judgment in the case. He was unable to get either. On January 24, Mr. Vyas wrote to the Prime Minister of Jaisalmer making the same request and also drawing his attention to the declaration made by the Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in regard to civil liberty etc. He asked for Sagarmal's release in view of the many years of imprisonment he had undergone accompanied by all manner of ill-treatment. No reply was received to this letter, nor has anyone, including his relatives, yet been able to get copies of the judgment delivered in Sagarmal's case.

On March 8, Mr. Vyas again wrote to the Political Agent to which he received a reply that he would look into this matter before long. Before, however, the Political Agent could visit Jaisalmer for this purpose, Sagarmal was dead, or, what is much more likely, done to death

so that he might not be able to tell the Political Agent and others of the tortures that had been inflicted upon him.

Even after the burning, Sagarmal was not taken to hospital for about 10 hours. His fetters were not removed even then. His wife was not allowed to see her husband even on his death. Some relatives were allowed to see him, but no conversation was permitted.

These are some of the facts relating to this tragedy. It is a horrible and scandalous story that anyone and more especially a well-known public worker should be treated in this way. The Jaisalmer State authorities have not even taken the trouble to have any kind of inquiry into the matter. The inference is obvious.

It is a matter which should shame not only the Jaisalmer authorities but other Indian Princes also, who value their good name and who have recently spoken about civil liberties.

#### **4. Telegram to Hare Krushna Mehtab<sup>1</sup>**

I agree with you that small States, particularly the Orissa States, should be amalgamated with the province.

1. *The Hindu*, 15 June 1946. This was in reply to the addressee's telegram: "When you speak of responsible government under the rulers, you obviously refer to big States; but an unqualified statement creates confusion. I request you to make it clear that small States, particularly the Orissa States, should be amalgamated with the province."

#### **5. Firing in Central India States<sup>1</sup>**

There has rather suddenly and almost simultaneously been conflict and trouble in a number of Indian States in Central India States of Bagod, Sanila and Maihar. Arrests of office-bearers of Praja Mandals have

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 19 July 1946. *National Herald*, 20 July 1946.

taken place and though Praja Mandals are legal, any person enrolling as a member is likely to be harassed.

I do not know if this is the result of a uniform policy suggested from above, but, in any event, it is not becoming, and is bound to lead to tension and conflict.

In Rewa, the ruler's promise of responsible government, which was accepted by his successor in the government, yet remains to be fulfilled and conditions in that State are bad.

But the gravest news<sup>2</sup> comes from Ratlam where, as a result of extensive police firing, many persons are dead and a large number wounded. These include women and children. There has been complete hartal for many days. I do not have the facts yet except that there has been some labour trouble there.

In any event, such an occurrence demands full and impartial inquiry, and I trust that the State authorities will immediately announce this.

The president of the States People's Regional Council, Shri Vijai Vargiya, is proceeding to Ratlam and I hope that the authorities will give him all necessary facilities.

To the people I would urge that they should remain calm and peaceful and hold together without fear and without indulging in any wrong action. They should help the wounded and those in trouble.

2. On 16 July 1946, six persons died and 27 were injured in firing at Ratlam where a hartal from 13 July was being observed because the ration of food was reduced and prices of grains increased by the State authorities.

## **6. A Note on Pataudi<sup>1</sup>**

For some time past I have been following in papers reports on happenings<sup>2</sup> in Pataudi. Someone sent me a telegram on the subject but otherwise no reference has been made to me and I do not know exactly what the facts are.

Pataudi is a very small State and normally it should be easy to settle any dispute there. There is no reason why these disputes should linger

1. Delhi, 20 July 1946. J.N. Collection.

2. Fifty Pataudi Praja Mandal workers were arrested in March 1946 following attempts to hold a regional States conference.

on indefinitely. The ruler of the State is at present away in England captaining the Indian cricket team and the State's affairs are in charge of the Diwan. I understand that the Diwan has expressed his willingness to agree to almost all the demands put forward on behalf of the people. He has said, however, that in the absence of the ruler he has no authority to release prisoners unconditionally. Only the ruler can do so. Meanwhile, he has no objection to their release on bail pending the ruler's orders.

If this is the position, there should not be any difficulty in effecting a temporary settlement. I cannot definitely advise about anything without greater knowledge of the facts. I am, therefore, requesting Shri Jainarain Vyas, General Secretary of the All India States People's Conference, and Shri Jugal Kishore Khanna to visit Pataudi and find out what the facts are. They will meet the Diwan there as well as the people leading the popular movement. They have full authority to give such advice as they think proper.

I am told that large numbers of people are performing some kind of satyagraha in front of the Diwan's house. This seems to me very improper. Private houses should not be besieged in this way. This kind of thing should therefore stop.

I am also told that among those arrested one person has some kind of a non-political charge against him. Whether there is any substance in this charge or not I do not know. But we must distinguish between political and non-political cases.

I do not know who is in charge of this popular movement in Pataudi. Normally reference should be made to the States People's Conference and their directions taken. This is not being done.

I hope that the people of Pataudi will take advantage of Shri Jainarain Vyas's and Shri Jugal Kishore Khanna's visit and abide by their advice.

2. Iftikhar Ali (1910-1952).

## 7. Telegram to the Maharaja of Bharatpur<sup>1</sup>

I have been grieved to learn that in contravention of Chancellor's declaration in Chamber of Princes Bharatpur government is continuing to

1. A.I.S.P.C. File No. 17/1946-47, p. 201, N.M.M.I.

suppress civil liberties.<sup>2</sup> That many public workers have been arrested and political prisoners are being treated harshly. I trust you will enquire into this matter and prevent repudiation of assurances given in prince's chamber.

Jawaharlal Nehru

2. The Bharatpur State Government had arrested 18 workers of the Rajya Praja Parishad including the president of the Parishad and the leader of the opposition in the State Assembly for speeches on the food problem.

**PRESIDENT OF THE CONGRESS**





## 1. Distress at Wrong Inferences<sup>1</sup>

The recent statement<sup>2</sup> issued by the Congress President in regard to the coming election of the next President of the Congress has put me in an embarrassing position.

Normally, I would have remained silent and given anxious thought to the matter, for the decision is going to be no easy one for me. All my instincts drive me to keep away from an office whose responsibilities might well overwhelm any person. And yet, there is the direction of my friend and chief, that scholar-statesman, who has borne this heavy burden so wisely and so worthily and steered the ship of our national movement during six long years of storm and stress and fateful history.

It was only one day before he issued the statement that Maulana Azad mentioned the matter to me for the first time. Till then no one had mentioned it and, indeed, I had given no thought to it, for I had taken it almost for granted that someone else should be President. I begged him then to give me some time to think.

One thing certainly I can say now. I am deeply grateful to the Congress President and my colleagues for the high honour they have proposed for me.

But I am issuing this statement for another reason. I have been surprised and distressed by some news services and journalists giving currency to fantastic and utterly wrong speculations and inferences which have no basis in fact.<sup>3</sup> Foreign newspapermen may not know our ways, but Indians have no such excuse.

Our normal election technique, which requires a certain time-table and procedure, has been forgotten by many of them, and they have jumped to strange conclusions.

The election that is to come has nothing to do with the political conversations now going on. It will not take effect for many weeks to come, possibly months, and even when it takes effect in the formal sense, it will mean no change in the general direction of our policy in regard to matters which have come up for discussion during recent weeks in Delhi.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 27 April 1946. *National Herald*, 29 April 1946.
2. Maulana Azad said on 26 April 1946 that "under the present circumstances, Pandit Nehru is the best choice" for the Congress presidency.
3. One such report stated that the selection of Jawaharlal as President of the Congress was meant to eliminate the friction between the Muslim League and the Congress and to placate Jinnah.

That direction must remain, whoever happens to be elected, with our chief, who has played so notable a part and whose supreme fitness for it no one else can approach.

We do not change horses in midstream, especially when the horse is a tried one and high-spirited and sure-footed.

## **2. Odd Happenings in the Punjab<sup>1</sup>**

Odd things happen in India, but the Punjab must surely hold the record for the oddest of these. In the Punjab, ministers exist somewhere at the top, but as of old, it is the district magistrate who really functions and rules. District magistrates of the Punjab are also of a special variety, and their authoritarian decrees dare not be touched by any minister. Then, of course, there is the C.I.D., which flourishes like a green bay tree and is a law unto itself. What the ministers do in the Punjab is not very clear to the uninitiated.

Recently, we have had a remarkable instance in Gujranwala, which is significant of the mentality of the real rulers of the province. The British Labour Party and the Government, which claim to be Socialist, should ponder over it. The Punjab Congress Socialist Party intended to hold a workers' training camp there. 'This was not a military camp, nor was there any parade, or drilling about it. It was merely a summer study camp, so often held in England or elsewhere. Various objections were taken to this by the authorities and all manner of obstructions were placed in the way of the organisers. To avoid trouble, they shifted to a private house, where they intended to hold study circles. But the C.I.D. did not approve of even this, and the district magistrate passed the following order: "On a careful examination of the entire position, it is not possible for me to accord permission to a series of study circles being held at Gujranwala by the Punjab Congress Socialist Party."

This means that even private study groups cannot be held in private houses. It must be remembered that the Punjab Congress Socialist Party is a legal party. Greater interference with the most elementary human rights can hardly be imagined. Obviously, this kind of interference cannot be tolerated for long. It is for the Punjab Government

1. Statement to the press, Naini Tal, 7 June 1946. *National Herald*, 8 June 1946.

to consider whither it is heading and what kind of credit it is going to have in the eyes of the world.

### 3. Only One More Push<sup>1</sup>

I recall the storm on the day of the Raigarh Congress session and compare the past six years of Maulana Azad's presidentship to a storm. These years were most momentous in the history of the Congress and of India, as they were years of a great revolution in the country.

Who is there among us who can follow in his footsteps and carry the burden with the same ability and courage as he did? As for myself, I was for a long time unable to make up my mind whether to accept the responsibility of presidentship now or not. But the day before yesterday, I persuaded myself to shoulder the responsibility on the advice<sup>2</sup> of Mahatma Gandhi and also that of my colleagues in the Working Committee.

We now stand on the doorstep of our freedom. Only one more push and we shall reach our cherished goal. In every country, great changes are taking place. The presidentship of the Congress is as heavy and arduous as any high office in the world. It may not be possible for one single individual to conscientiously shoulder the duties of the President of the Congress. But with the help of my colleagues, I feel confident that I will be able to carry the great burden which the Maulana Sahab has placed on me.

The question before us is not merely whether we should accept or reject any particular resolution. It is not merely a question of the merits or demerits of the proposed constituent assembly. It is the vital question of the freedom of India. During the last 25 years, millions of people have faithfully followed the Congress in the hope and belief of achieving national independence. Today, the Congress is more powerful than ever before. But I must also admit that there is much internal weakness in the organisation. The Congress is a platform for all

1. Speech at the A.I.C.C. meeting on taking over the presidentship of the Congress, Bombay, 6 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 7 July 1946.
2. Jawaharlal was elected President of the Congress for the fourth time on 9 May 1946. On 6 July 1946, Mahatma Gandhi said: "I told Jawaharlal that he must wear the crown of thorns for the sake of the nation and he has agreed."

shades of groups and parties to work for the common goal of freedom. We must see that our internal weaknesses do not come in the way of achieving our main objective, namely, the independence of India. We must eliminate these weaknesses, as we are engaged in the most difficult task of ending British imperialism in India. In this task, we require complete unity and the strength of the people behind us.

The British regime in India is beginning to end. The curtain is now being rung down. This is the most delicate moment in India's history when we should muster all our strength and show no weakness. We have, therefore, to shake off all symptoms of weakness. We must be prepared to face new problems that may arise. We can do this only if we are united and strong.

In India we are faced with famine and grave economic problems. In South Africa, our honour is assailed. There is rampant racial discrimination against Indian nationals. Even in Ceylon, which is really part of India, though constitutionally it may not be so, we are having a difficult situation.

The world today is being torn asunder. Whatever is happening today has nothing to do with the war that is already over. The question is, "when will the next war be?" India has always stood for the ideal of freedom. We are against all kinds of imperialism, whether British or any other. We are against fascism and Nazism. We cannot, therefore, be a willing ally with any country which deprives the freedom of another country, big or small. We shall uphold the right to freedom of every country. The Indian National Congress today has attained a status, not only in the eyes of our own people, but in the eyes of the people of the world.

When we attain our own freedom, which is not far off, and establish friendly relations with other countries, we shall have to consider not only our own problems, but those of other countries, for they will affect us vitally.

This session of the A.I.C.C. could not be summoned earlier, as the Working Committee had been carrying on negotiations with the Cabinet Mission. It was not possible to call a meeting of the A.I.C.C. in the middle of the negotiations. The Working Committee has lost no time in seeking the sanction of the A.I.C.C. to whatever we have done and it is for the A.I.C.C. to endorse or reject the decisions of the Working Committee.

#### 4. To N.G. Ranga<sup>1</sup>

8.7.46

My dear Ranga,

The enclosed letter makes serious allegations.<sup>2</sup> I can hardly believe that they are all true. If they are then the elections may be challenged later and possibly set aside. So I hope you will look into the matter and set things right. If necessary postpone the elections in this district so as to make the necessary changes. The Congress cannot function as an adjunct of the Kisan Sabha or any other organisation.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P-28(1)-1946, p. 119, N.M.M.L.
2. Allegations of partisanship and irregularities because of favouritism towards certain candidates in district Congress elections in Guntur district had been made.

#### 5. To Mridula Sarabhai<sup>1</sup>

Bombay  
8 July 1946

My dear Mridula,

Kripalani has shown me your letter addressed to him about the selection of women candidates for the constituent assembly. It seems to me that there has been some misunderstanding about this matter. There was never a question before us preferring women recommended by the All India Women's Conference to Congresswomen. In our main resolution we specially asked that women should be included and we presumed that normally these women would be Congresswomen, some from provincial assemblies and some from outside. In addition to this we sent a list received from the Women's Conference for favourable consideration of the provincial parties in the assemblies. It was our desire not to impose people from above as far as possible, either men or women. A few names were certainly mentioned by us because we wanted them particularly there.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

It appears that those in charge of selecting candidates in the provinces have considered the few names we have sent or the All India Women's Conference list as something exclusive, that is that no other women should be taken in. That was not our intention, and I am sorry that this has been done.

It was because we were not suggesting any names barring some special ones that we did not think it worthwhile to consult Sucheta Kripalani or anyone else either for men or women. We left that to the provincial parties or their executives.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 6. The New Congress Executive<sup>1</sup>

Under Article 20 of the Congress constitution, I nominate the following members of the Working Committee:

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad  
Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel  
Dr. Rajendra Prasad  
Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan  
Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant  
Mr. C. Rajagopalachari  
Mr. Rafi Ahmed Kidwai  
Mr. Sarat Chandra Bose (Bengal)  
Srimati Kamaladevi (Karnataka)  
Rao Saheb Patwardhan (Maharashtra)  
Mr. Fakhruddin Ahmed (Assam)  
Sardar Partap Singh (Punjab)  
Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai and  
Dr. Balakrishna V. Keskar

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel will continue to act as treasurer and Shrimati Mridula Sarabhai and Dr. Balakrishna Keskar will be the general secretaries. Dr. Keskar is not at present a member of the A.I.C.C., but

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 9 July 1946. *The Hindu*, 10 July 1946.

it is expected that he will find a place in the A.I.C.C. in the near future.

I have found considerable difficulty in selecting names for the Working Committee, because I was loath to keep out the names of many old and valued colleagues who had shouldered the burden of Congress work in the Committee and the A.I.C.C. office for so long. At the same time, it was highly desirable for new elements to be taken into the Committee. I consulted my colleagues and notably Gandhiji in this matter and I have been largely guided by their advice though of course the responsibility for the final selection must remain with me.

We felt that our old colleagues, who have long been considered as the elder statesmen of the Congress, should in any event be there to give us the benefit of their advice and experience. They should normally be invited to our Working Committee sessions. I should like also to invite as frequently as possible leading representatives of the Harijans, the Indian Christians and some of the smaller minorities to assist us in our labours. The work before us is not only heavy but of the most vital importance and we want the utmost cooperation from all Congressmen and from the country at large. It will be my endeavour to seek this cooperation.

To Shri J.B. Kripalani, who has shouldered the burden of the Congress secretaryship for many years, I should especially like to express my sense of gratitude and appreciation. I have every confidence that he will allow us to profit by his long experience of running the A.I.C.C. office.

Shrimati Sarojini Naidu, though not now formally a member of the Working Committee, is as much a part of us and our work as anyone can be and she remains for us the pillar of strength and hope that she has always been. It is difficult to imagine a Working Committee without her. But, in effect, the Committee will not be without her help and cooperation.

To all old members and new, I send my greetings at the outset of these new changes. May we all prove true and faithful servants of India and our great national organisation in the trying days ahead. *Jai Hind.*

## 7. To Rajendra Prasad<sup>1</sup>

Bombay  
9.7.46

My dear Rajendra Babu,

You will have seen the list of the new Working Committee. It was made after sleepless nights and in continuous consultation with Bapu and others. I hope you approve of it.

We all missed you here. I hope you are better now.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal

1. Rajendra Prasad Papers, National Archives of India.

## 8. Telegram to Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
18.7.46

Have received numerous complaints about district Congress elections in Andhra especially Guntur district grave irregularities alleged. Would like you proceed there meet Ranga and others report and make arrangements for functioning election tribunal informing us of position and steps taken.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P. 28(II)-1946, p. 451, N.M.M.L.

## 9. Reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. Office<sup>1</sup>

It is desirable that the Working Committee should consider the reorganisation of the A.I.C.C. office, opening of new departments, employment of new personnel etc. The general secretaries should prepare a

1. Note for the Working Committee, Allahabad, 18 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part I)-1946, pp. 143-147, N.M.M.L.



note on this subject for presentation before the Working Committee. Before that I should like to see this note and make my own suggestions.

The proper procedure in the future for every item on the Working Committee agenda should be that every item should have a brief note attached and a draft resolution recommended by the office. This will facilitate consideration.

No permanent arrangements can be made till the general secretaries have acquired a full knowledge of the working of the office and till the Working Committee have considered their proposals. Meanwhile, we should have the following departments :

1. Administration of office
2. Accounts
3. Library and records
4. Congress organisation
5. Volunteers
6. Women
7. Foreign
8. Indians overseas
9. Constituent assembly
10. Congress Provincial Governments
11. Economic and political research
12. Labour
13. States people
14. Publicity and publications

Some of these departments do not exist at present and have to be created. Each department should have some person in charge and the general secretaries should assume responsibility for some particular departments, that is apart from the actual person in charge.

It is presumed that both the general secretaries will spend much of their time at headquarters. Keskar especially should remain at headquarters unless some very special business takes him elsewhere.

Sadiq Ali is at present in charge of administrative and other general office work. Ramsevak Pande is the accountant. M.L. Bhushan Singh is in charge of the library and Ramcharan Pande of records. Maitra is in charge of the economic and political research department. The constituent assembly department, which will have its office in Delhi, will be in the charge of Krishna Kripalani. The women's department is in the charge of Smt. Sucheta Kripalani, and the new volunteers' department has been put under General Shah Nawaz Khan. Indians overseas is under Satiacharan Sastri and the foreign department was being conducted by Ameer Raza, but it is likely that his services will be lent to the U.P. Government.

As a branch of the A.I.C.C. office has been opened in New Delhi for the constituent assembly, this work will be carried on separately under Krishna Kripalani's supervision.

Of the other suggested departments, General Secretary Mridula Sarabhai will be in general charge of :

1. Congress organisation
2. Volunteers
3. Women
4. Labour
5. States

General Secretary Keskar will look after the administrative work of the office and be in general charge of the following departments :

1. Foreign
2. Indians overseas
3. Congress Provincial Governments
4. Publicity and publications
5. Economic and political research

At present there are two accounts with banks, one operated upon by the General Secretary and the other by the Office Secretary, Sadiq Ali. The latter will continue to be operated upon at present, and normally all expenditure will be incurred through that office account. The General Secretary's account will be operated upon by either of the General Secretaries. Normally payments will be made out of this account to the office account from time to time.

The arrangements suggested above are provisional and will be reconsidered after the next meeting of the Working Committee when the views of the Committee are known and the general secretaries have made their proposals about office reorganisation and work generally. In making these proposals a revised budget has also to be prepared.

Though each General Secretary will be specially responsible for the particular departments in his or her charge, there should be an attempt at complete coordination of work. This will be facilitated by frequent mutual consultation not only between the General Secretaries but also between them and the heads of departments. It is suggested that every morning or every other day all these people might meet together for a short while to consider any new problems or points that have arisen. This will keep all of them in touch with each other's work and department and produce a sense of coordination and cooperative effort.

Shri V.K. Krishna Menon has made a proposal about foreign publicity to be conducted through the India League in London. This proposal should be carefully thought out for the consideration of the Working Committee.



TAKING OVER CONGRESS PRESIDENTSHIP, BOMBAY, 10 JULY 1946



AT THE A.I.C.C. SESSION IN BOMBAY, JULY 1946

Perhaps the most important department of our activity relates to Congress organisation. This will require careful, continuous and tactful handling because such organisational matters have ultimately to be carried through by provincial and local organisations. The A.I.C.C. office can only make suggestions, give advice and collect data. At present the Congress organisation is not in a good state and requires complete overhaul in most places. This can only be done with the full cooperation of provincial and local organisations. The provincial committees should be addressed immediately on this subject and apart from such suggestions as might be made by us, they should be asked to make their own suggestions. It will probably be necessary to engage several persons for continuous touring and inspection work.

Another important work for our office is to develop continuous contacts with the Congress provincial governments. We must know exactly what they are doing and what they propose to do. It will be desirable to prepare a brief fortnightly report of their activities which might be sent to all the Congress provincial governments as well as to P.C.C.s. This material should also be utilised for our foreign service.

In considering the reorganisation of the office or the opening of new departments, full advantage should be taken of Acharya Kripalani's advice and suggestions.

Smt. Sucheta Kripalani has been in charge of the women's department. I hope that she will continue this work.

I am being associated with the A.I.C.C. office after many years and I am rather out of touch with its working. I hope to regain touch soon and to have the full cooperation of my old colleagues there and the staff as well as new colleagues who may join us.

## **10. To Presidents and Secretaries of the P.C.C.s<sup>1</sup>**

Dear Comrade,

On taking charge of the Congress presidentship, I wish to send you my greetings and to convey to you my earnest desire that during the critical months ahead, we shall all cooperate together in the great tasks ahead.

1. Allahabad, 18 July 1946. From *National Herald*, 19 July 1946.

We have many problems to face, many questions to answer, many knots to unravel, and yet the basic problem is the strengthening and reorganisation of the Congress so as to make it more than ever before the embodiment and organised expression of the people's will and the way to disciplined service in the cause of the country's freedom. While our strength and popular backing have grown greatly, organisationally we have become weaker and inner conflicts and narrow party issues have often diverted us from the straight path.

I trust that you will immediately address yourself to this situation and, avoiding party rivalry, work for the consolidation of the Congress organisation. We must make it reach every village, and it would be desirable to have a Congress representative in each village, apart from the members we may have there. Our office will address you further on this subject.

As you know the General Secretaries of the Congress now are Mridula Sarabhai and Dr. Balkrishna Keskar. They have a hard task before them following as they do Acharya Kripalani, who has shouldered this heavy burden for many years. But they will have, I am sure, the advice and guidance of Acharya Kripalani and the full cooperation of the members of the A.I.C.C. staff. Even more so your cooperation is needed and I hope this will be forthcoming in full measure.

Maj. General Shafi Nawaz Khan has consented to take charge of the volunteers department and he will open his office in Swaraj Bhawan, Allahabad. We are fortunate in having a man of his experience and calibre for this important work. He will communicate with you directly and you will no doubt cooperate with him in every way to build up a Congress volunteer organisation in your province. *Jai Hind.*

## 11. The A.I.C.C. and the Press<sup>1</sup>

The A.I.C.C. office welcomes the cooperation of the press and representatives of the press are free to come there when they choose. In taking advantage of this freedom they have a certain responsibility also. It would be improper for them to give publicity to any paper which they

1. Note for representatives of the press, 19 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-45-1946, p. 299, N.M.M.L.

might see or any conversation they might overhear. If such instances of publication of what should not be published occur, the office is placed in a false position. Any such unauthorised publicity is a breach of the confidence which the A.I.C.C. office wishes to place on representatives of the press.

It is requested therefore that every item of news relating to the A.I.C.C. office, or the President and Secretaries or other staff, should be first passed by some responsible authority in the office, and only then issued to the press. This will ensure accuracy and authenticity and will be to the advantage of all parties concerned.

Jawaharlal Nehru

This note is not meant for publication. It should be given to individual representatives of the press, news agencies etc.

J.N.

## 12. The Observance of Ninth August<sup>1</sup>

I want to remind you of a date which has become memorable in the history of our struggle for freedom—August 9. That date is still three weeks distant from today, but it is desirable for provincial Congress committees to issue suitable instructions to district and local organisations for the proper observance of this day. In this matter I shall only make some general observations leaving the details to the P.C.C.s.

The main item on the programme should be a public meeting where a resolution confirming in dignified language our demand for full independence and "Quit India" should be passed. Before this resolution two minutes' silence should be observed standing in memory of those who died or otherwise suffered in the cause of freedom. There should be no hartal. People generally should be requested to put up national flags on their houses, shops, etc., but there must be no compulsion in the matter.

1. Circular letter to Provincial Congress Committees, Allahabad, 19 July 1946. *National Herald*, 20 July 1946.

The day is a solemn day for us and it should be observed with all dignity and solemnity. Items of constructive work should be especially taken up.

There has been a tendency for some time past for bombastic and truculent speeches to be delivered and often violence is preached. This is not in keeping with the policy, strength and dignity of the Congress. The language of strength does not end in a shriek or in hysterical outbursts. Also so long as our policy is one of nonviolence, as it undoubtedly is today, it is improper to go against this policy in any way.

It is desirable on this day especially not to indulge in any vituperation or conflict but rather to demonstrate to the world our unshakable resolve to free ourselves.

### 13. Goa's Struggle for Freedom<sup>1</sup>

In the midst of formidable problems which face India, little Goa offers its own problem. But because Goa is an enclave on the west coast of India, we may not ignore or forget it.

Wherever human liberty and human suffering are involved, the problem is not a small one. Wherever people struggle for freedom and against repression, they enact a drama which is always full of vital interest to lovers of liberty all over the world. Goa also raises international issues, which are bound to come to the forefront in the near future.

Eighteen years ago, a Congress committee was started in Goa by Mr. Tristao Braganza Cunha<sup>2</sup> and for some years he was a member of the All India Congress Committee. Later, under the constitution of the Congress, such foreign committees were not affiliated.

I remember those days of association with Mr. Cunha. Now he lies in some Portuguese prison waiting to be tried by court martial, although no martial law has been proclaimed in Goa and Mr. Cunha is not a soldier.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 20 July 1946. *National Herald*, 21 July 1946.
2. (1891-1958); Goan freedom fighter who was kept in jail in Portuguese East Africa from 1946 to 1950; Chairman of the Goan Action Committee in Bombay; fought for the liberation of Portuguese districts of Nagar Haveli and Dadra in 1954.



In Goa, for a vast span of years, there has been no shadow of civil liberty. No meetings can be held and nothing can be printed, not even a wedding card, without police permission.

A month ago, Dr. Lohia broke this ban and addressed a meeting. Since then the people of Goa have woken up from their slumber and have repeatedly tried to hold peaceful meetings. The Portuguese Administration is trying to suppress this popular movement with methods of cruelty after the fascist pattern. The present struggle is one for civil liberties.

I should like to tell the people of Goa how we all sympathise with them in this struggle and how we are following it with anxious interest. For us, Goa is as much a part of India as any other part, and the freedom of India inevitably includes the freedom of the people of Goa. Goa cannot be separated from India. So any struggle for freedom there becomes part of our own struggle.

But whatever struggle there may be, it is wholly unbecoming for the Portuguese authorities in Goa to use the methods they have adopted.

In particular, the trial by court martial of a well-known citizen and public worker of Goa for his standing for civil liberties is something that is peculiarly bad. I understand that he was not even given sufficient time to prepare for his defence.

There are plenty of Goans in Bombay, and I hope that not only they, but the Congress organisation in Bombay, will give such assistance as they can in helping by way of defence or otherwise those who are carrying on the struggle in Goa.

To the people of Goa I send my greetings and good wishes.

#### **14. To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
22 July 1946

Dear friend,

As you know, there has been considerable feeling in Congress circles in regard to the events that took place in August 1942 and subsequently the official repression that followed. There has been and is a strong popular demand for an inquiry and punishment of officials and others who are found guilty of inhuman acts or any activity which normally

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 72-1946-47, pp. 101-103, N.M.M.L.

civilised governments do not indulge in. This matter is continually being raised in provincial Congress committees and among Congressmen and the public. Letters are appearing in the press and recently discussions have taken place in some provincial assemblies. I have no doubt that you have had to face this problem from day to day and have given it serious thought. I have been unhappy over the lack of action thus far. Yet I realised the many difficulties in the way and the undesirability of doing something which might distract us for the moment from other vital problems.

During the last year I had occasion to discuss this problem several times with the Viceroy. This was always at his instance. We expressed our opposing viewpoints to each other. My own viewpoint was that it was not our desire to punish as such any individual even though such punishment might have been richly deserved. Nor was it my desire to have roving inquiries into past events; but I told him that I had no doubt in my own mind from the facts placed before me that there have been numerous cases of inhuman conduct and extreme corruption on the part of many members of the services. Also it was undoubted that there was strong popular feeling on the subject. Because of this it was inevitable that our popular assemblies should reflect this feeling and our governments be influenced by it. Quite apart from the question of punishment, it was impossible for us to cooperate in governmental or other work with persons who had been guilty of what we considered inhuman conduct or corruption. We did not desire to discredit any service as a whole or to break up the morale of a service. Nevertheless, even in the interest of morale both of the services and the public it was necessary that people against whom there was such evidence and so much popular ill will should be removed from service. This was the general attitude I took up.

I have now had occasion to have another talk with the Viceroy on this subject.<sup>3</sup> I repeated what I have previously said. The Viceroy was anxious, for reasons which will be obvious to you, that he should protect his services. He said that any roving inquiry would be very undesirable and would lead to a great deal of bitterness. He admitted that much that was very wrong had been done by certain government officials, just as, he added, the people had misbehaved greatly on their part. He appreciated, however, that there was popular feeling on this subject and it was difficult for an officer to continue in his place if there was some evidence of grave misconduct against him and popular ill will. Such an officer, he was of the opinion, might resign.

3. See *ante*, pp. 264-266.

In view of what I have said above, I suggest to you that you might approach this question in the following manner. There need not be any large-scale or public inquiry, but your Government might inquire into specific and flagrant cases which are well known. Such an inquiry can be private. Where your Government is satisfied that there is a *prima facie* case of extreme misconduct or corruption, you might take up this case with the Governor and arrange for the retirement from service of such a person. It is obvious that a person against whom there is a great deal of popular ill-will should not continue in service. If this method is adopted, it should lead to the purification of the services as well as to soothing public sentiment which has been rightly excited over such matters.

I need not go into any greater detail as you will, no doubt, know best how to proceed. I think that there should be no delay about this.

Of course, if you find that there is a very flagrant case of corruption, it is certainly open to you to take such other steps as you like. I am in no way suggesting a limitation of your discretion in such matters. What I have suggested is a quick, smooth, and relatively easy way of dealing with a matter which has long troubled us all.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 15. Need for Unity of Action<sup>1</sup>

I am glad that Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan has made it clear that there should be no hartal on August 9.<sup>2</sup> His original statement had been issued simultaneously with mine, and he was not then aware of the directions I was giving for the observance of that day.

This incident, however, raises an important issue, which deserves careful thought by all Congressmen and calls for clear decision. The Congress has allowed the largest latitude for the holding and expression of opinion within its fold. But, at the same time, it has demanded unity

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 August 1946. *National Herald*, 2 August 1946.

2. Earlier, Jayaprakash Narayan had called for a hartal.

of action, and it has developed its strength because of the discipline in corporate action.

It seems to me highly undesirable to encourage any tendency which weakens this unity of action. This is especially important in the present state of the continuing and developing crisis in our political and economic life. Hartals have become a recognised method of expressing and organising public feeling. It is the Congress which initiated them on the political front, and the first great hartal of this kind took place on 6 April 1919. But hartals can be cheapened by too frequent use, and they can be called for trivial or even wrong ends.

In any event, it seems to me essential that there should be discipline and unity of action among Congressmen in this and other matters. We stand at the threshold of grave and far-reaching developments, and we have to prepare for them with all the strength and wisdom that we possess.

#### **16. Telegram to B.V. Keskar and Mridula Sarabhai<sup>1</sup>**

Please inform provincial committees and press Congress President's directions about August ninth should be carried out. Hartals inadvisable. Request Jayaprakash to say likewise.

Jawaharlal

1. 1 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G 51-1946, p. 32, N.M.M.L.

#### **17. Note on Economic and Research Section<sup>1</sup>**

The work of this section should not merely be to collect and file economic data but to present it in suitable form. A monthly report on the

1. Allahabad, 3 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part I)-1946, p. 87, N.M.M.L.

economic situation in India, as well as the activities of the Congress governments should be prepared. This should be placed before the Working Committee and be used (not verbatim) for bulletins and news-letters.

The preparation of plans and monographs is too difficult and intricate a piece of work for this section. At most it can collect information about existing plans. Generally speaking monographs on special subjects should be prepared by competent experts. We can request such experts to undertake this work usually on topical subjects. Prof. Gyan Chand<sup>2</sup> might be asked to prepare a monograph on the proposal to abolish the zamindari system — the possible alternatives and consequences.

It is not worthwhile increasing the staff till each new person has been completely absorbed and has made himself useful.

I do not see any special necessity for travelling for this section.

2. (b. 1893); an eminent economist; taught in Banaras Hindu University and Patna College; took part in the Quit India movement; economic adviser to the central cabinet, 1949-51; author of several books including *Fiscal Reconstruction in India* (1931) and *The New Economy of China* (1958).

## 18. On A.I.C.C. Library<sup>1</sup>

The librarian's note contains some good suggestions. But to suggest that it would take a year to classify 6000 books is just absurd. Something must be wrong with the method. With a relatively small number of books no very intricate system is necessary.

Obviously the books must be easily available for reference. A proper catalogue is necessary. Books may be lent provided deposits are received to protect against loss etc.

A temporary assistant might be engaged to help for three months as suggested.

1. Note, Allahabad, 3 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 1)-1946, p. 77, N.M.M.L.

**19. To Kailas Nath Katju<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad

3 August 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,

I am glad you are encouraging cooperatives in the province and hope to have a network of them. I feel, however, that the old methods of co-operative organisation which presumably we are following here do not go far enough. There is a possibility of their not succeeding because of lack of trained human material and other reasons.

A totally new development in cooperative organisation was the industrial cooperatives of China. These produced through small-scale industries. They succeeded to a remarkable degree within a short period and drew the attention of the rest of the world. It is true that part of their success was due to wartime scarcity; also to the man at the head of the organisation who was very able. Since then there has been a lot of talk of industrial cooperatives and even in India we have toyed with this idea.

So far as I know all our cooperative schemes have nothing to do with this modern approach which combines the cooperative method with production. Some years back an industrial cooperative society was formed in Bombay and it has done very good work, though so far on a somewhat limited scale. It proposes to extend its activities. The real man in charge is Renu,<sup>2</sup> an enthusiastic and able man. Recently a number of others have joined this group, including, I think, J.R.D. Tata.

When the I.N.A. people came back to India I was anxious to have some of them trained for industrial cooperatives. We arranged to send a first batch of 20 to Bombay for this training. In this batch there were, I think, five men from the U.P. They have come back after training as qualified organisers of industrial cooperatives and yet they have been hanging about doing nothing. When I was in Lucknow sometime back I put two of them in touch with C.B. Gupta who said he would find work for them. I do not know what happened to them afterwards. But it is not a question of just finding work for them. Their special training has to be utilised. It is a pity at any time to waste such training, more so when that training is peculiarly suited to the kind of development you are thinking of. I suggest to you that you must consider this problem somewhat apart from your general cooperative schemes. You might appoint a special committee for industrial co-

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 87-89, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

2. L.N. Renu, Hon. Secretary, Provincial Industrial Cooperative Association, Bombay.

operatives and use these trained men for developing them. If you like you could even have some more of our trained men from the Punjab because they are not being used there. If you appoint any such committee, it would be desirable to get an expert from Bombay to be a member of it and to guide it. He could stay for a while and then leave matters in charge of your committee and the trained organisers. My point is that this question of industrial cooperatives has to be looked at from a special point of view which has little to do with our normal working of cooperative organisations. For my part I am quite convinced that industrial cooperatives are especially suited to India today and once they start going they will spread rapidly to the great advantage of our people.

I understand that our I.N.A. office in Delhi has repeatedly written to you about these trained organisers but without any result...

As I have said above we can supply more, chiefly from the Punjab. But in any event you should utilise the U.P. men and not allow them to drift away to other activities. Please let me know if you require further names for this purpose; also if I can communicate on your behalf with the Bombay committee. I shall be in Bombay from the 15th August onwards for some days when I am likely to meet Renu there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 20. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
3 August 1946

My dear Pantji,

I hope to meet you in Wardha. I understand that Rafi will not be able to go there because of his Assembly activities.

I do not know what arrangements you have for publicity of your Government's work and who is in charge of them. I think there is plenty of room for improvement in them. For instance, all your schemes for the abolition of the zamindari system is first-class news both for India and abroad; so also your schemes for development of electrical power and

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 95-97, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

consequently industries; also cooperatives. If these could be briefly written up they will go a long way to show people what we are doing or thinking of doing. This is especially important for foreign purposes.

About cooperatives I have written to Katju separately, but I should like to draw your attention to this matter also. Katju has talked about a wide network of cooperatives in the province, but all this appears to be on old lines. They are good so far as they go. What is urgently needed, however, is a new approach to the problem and that is the industrial co-operative approach which succeeded so well in China. We have taken the trouble to train some of our young men from the I.N.A. as industrial cooperative organisers. Among these five are from the U.P. and they have been hanging around for a long time doing nothing. They might be absorbed in the present cooperative scheme, but that is not good enough and their special training will be lost. I suggest that a special branch department be started for industrial cooperatives and a small committee appointed for this purpose. If you so desire, and I think it would be desirable, I could arrange to send you from Bombay a competent industrial cooperatives organiser who could help in the initial stages. I do hope you will give early thought to this matter, for I believe it can take us very far...

Another matter: Publicity naturally includes educational and health publicity as well as an attempt to improve communal relations etc. It is a wide subject which can be dealt with both by speech, in writing, by films and otherwise. The Government of India's Publicity Department, which is on its last legs, has certainly got a certain technical competence. I was approached by one man in it who had some bright ideas which he wanted to be conveyed to the provincial governments. I think it will be a good thing if someone, who is in charge of publicity on your behalf, could go to Delhi and meet people there. If you feel that something of this kind can be done, I could make the necessary arrangements and contacts.

I am writing to you separately about our provincial governments taking special steps to help minorities, backward classes etc. I know you are thinking of this and have arranged something for the Momins. Still I wanted to draw the attention of all our Prime Ministers. The obvious and basic method of help to any backward group is through educational scholarships. I hope you will extend this method to various minority groups, scheduled classes and others in a like situation.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru



## 21. Soldiers of Freedom<sup>1</sup>

I want every boy and girl of India to become a soldier in the cause of the independence of the country. By soldier I mean a disciplined and honest worker who will serve the country and maintain the honour and prestige of the motherland.

I welcome the formation of the brigades and emphasise that they should be guided by a sense of service and discipline. Discipline is necessary, and especially so when the struggle for the independence of our motherland is essentially nonviolent.

A few disciplined soldiers are far more useful to the country and to the struggle than a crowd of a thousand undisciplined men.

I advise the members of the Rani of Jhansi Brigade to convey this message of discipline and service to all their fellow countrywomen and men. Discipline and service raise your strength and with such strength the stature and strength of the entire country is raised.

1. Address to a rally of the Rani of Jhansi Brigade and the Balika Sena Dal, which were formed in Allahabad by the Mahila Congress Committee, Allahabad, 4 August 1946. From *National Herald*, 5 August 1946.

## 22. To Raja S. Sajid Hussain<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

Dear Raja Saheb,<sup>2</sup>

I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging your letter of May 25th which I appreciated. I am interested in your ideas about the development of hydroelectricity and school education through the medium of sound films. I am afraid we are backward in both these matters and few people know about the use of films for this purpose.

Your suggestion for using a modified Roman script is ingenious, but I fear that the time is not ripe for any such proposal.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1910); ruler of Kotwara; founder of the Hindustani League which advocated the use of modified Roman script as a solution of the Urdu-Hindi controversy; believer in films as a medium of instruction.

**23. To K. Gokul Sing<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

I have read with pleasure your letter of May 27th in which you tell us about the island of Mauritius and of the Indians there. As you point out Mauritius has practically become an Indian island as the majority of the population is now Indian. I am glad that all Indians there, whether they are Hindus or Muslims, pull together. In particular I hope that the intelligentsia will interest themselves in raising the working classes and others who may suffer disabilities.

Although we are full of our own problems in India, we think often of our countrymen abroad and we want to develop ever-closer relations with them. An independent India will, no doubt, try to help her children abroad in every way. The status of Indians anywhere in the world will ultimately depend upon the status of their motherland in the world.

I hope that you will keep in touch with the foreign department of the All India Congress Committee in Allahabad. In this way we shall know more about you and you will know something about our activities here.

With all good wishes to you, and *Jai Hind*.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Of the India League of Mauritius.

**24. Congress Elections in Andhra<sup>1</sup>**

Shrimati Kamaladevi was requested to inquire and report to us. When this was done by me I did not know that the previous General Secretary had asked Shri Konda Venkatappayya to inquire especially in regard to the functioning of the election tribunals. His report has now come and his decision is clearly in favour of the new election tribunal appointed

1. Note for Congress General Secretary, 5 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. P128(H)-1946, p. 281, N.M.M.L.

by the new Andhra P.C.C. This decision must be given effect and other parties informed accordingly. All pending disputes should be referred to the tribunal.

There is no necessity for the matter to be put up now before the Working Committee but as it has been included in the agenda and Shri Kamaladevi has been asked to inquire into it, all relevant papers should be taken to Wardha for the Working Committee.

## 25. To the Prime Ministers of Congress Provinces<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
5 August 1946

Dear friend,

I wish to draw your attention to a matter which, no doubt, must be in your mind. Indeed I know that various Congress Governments are taking steps in this direction.

The communal question as well as the general minority question have to be dealt with on an all-India level. But there is another and a more basic way of tackling all these problems, a way which will not only give real help to those who are in need but will also produce a feeling among those concerned that our Governments are anxious to help them. This is by way of arranging scholarships and other educational facilities for minority groups, scheduled and backward classes, etc. The more this is done the better because thus we are not only helping a backward group but at the same time raising the level of the nation. I think much can be done and it is desirable to do it in a big way. Just a few odd scholarships or other help does not impress anyone.

In this connection as well as otherwise I would urge you to encourage the formation of industrial cooperatives. If you are interested in this, we shall try to help you in getting organisers. Please realise that this is something different from ordinary cooperatives because this involves the organisation of various types of producers. In this way small industries can be developed in a cooperative and democratic way. The example of China has proved how successful this can be on a very large scale.

I should like to know what arrangements your Government has made or is making for proper publicity. Publicity means both reaching out

1. A.I.C.C. File No. 71-1946-47, pp. 91-93, N.M.M.L.

people in your provinces as well as others in the rest of India or abroad. It includes an attempt to make our own people understand what your economic, industrial, educational, and health schemes are so that they can cooperate with them. Much of this publicity can be done effectively within the province by means of documentary films. Then there is the question of publicity outside India. The A.I.C.C. office would gladly take charge of this if full material is supplied regularly. This does not mean just sending Government reports, but intelligently written memoranda of the work being done.

In the months to come this kind of propaganda, which is really just giving facts properly arranged, is likely to have a considerable effect on public opinion in India as well as abroad, and it is highly important that this should be undertaken in an organised and intelligent way. My own impression has been that Congress Governments are so busy with their own activities that they seldom take the trouble to let the world know what these activities are. All manner of false and malicious charges are made against them and they feel too superior to deal with them. This is hardly a wise policy. Occasionally some minister delivers a speech or issues a statement, but this is not good enough.

I would suggest also to your Publicity Department to send their material directly to the India League, 47 Strand, London, W.C. 2(England).

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 26. The Congress Budget for 1945-1946<sup>1</sup>

The budget estimates for the year ending 30th September 1946 amounted to Rs. 77,800 expenditure and a like income. During the nine months ending 30th June, 1946 actual expenditure has been Rs. 38,005-11-6. As a matter of fact this is rather a misleading figure as some pending accounts have not been included, especially travelling expenses and press bills. Salaries have now been increased and additional houses taken on rent. In several departments expenditure will go up during the next three months, that is, till the end of the present budget year.

1. Note, 5 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 3)-1946, p. 47, N.M.M.L.

On the other hand there has been a saving under some heads like library, Swaraj Bhawan repairs. The present estimate for expenditure for the year ending 30th September 1946 is Rs. 71,000. This is less than the budgeted amount by Rs. 6,800.

The Working Committee's sanction is not necessary for any additional amount for this year. But it is necessary for additional expenditure under some heads, especially travelling and miscellaneous.

If expenditure had not suddenly gone up in July, especially in regard to establishment charges and house rent, a much greater saving would have been made.

It must be noted that the saving in Swaraj Bhawan repairs is temporary only. These will involve us in greater expenditures during next year. I suggest that the Swaraj Bhawan budget be kept separately.

## **27. The Congress Budget for 1946-47<sup>1</sup>**

The budget estimate for the year 1945-46 totalled Rs. 77,800. The budget for the next year will exceed this figure considerably. This will be due to several factors: (1) Increments in salaries (2) Increase of staff (3) Additional departments (4) House rent for houses taken on hire for staff or office work (5) Foreign publicity (6) Travelling.

The General Secretaries and the Permanent Secretary have prepared estimates for expenditures for the year 1946-47. These totalled up to Rs. 168,820. They do not include repairs to Swaraj Bhawan or purchase of additional furniture which will be necessary. These estimates depend on the engagement of new staff, specially the higher staff, and it is probable that it will take some time for new appointments to be made, even when sanctioned. The estimates require checking, though they have been carefully made. But before these estimates are finally framed or passed it is necessary for the Working Committee to approve of the policy underlying them, i.e. the enlargement of the office by opening new departments etc. Once this policy is laid down suitable estimates can immediately be made.

1. Note, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (Part 2)-1946, pp. 53-55. N.M.M.L.

It will therefore be desirable for the Working Committee at first to consider this general policy. Perhaps this may suitably be done by a sub-committee which will report to the Working Committee. This sub-committee will of course meet some time during the session of the next Working Committee.

The next step would be for that sub-committee or another to consider the various budget estimates and to approve of them as a whole or make their own suggestions. It would probably be desirable for the committee to leave the working out of the general policy which they lay down to the secretaries. It is difficult to lay down hard and fast rules in an expanding establishment.

I would suggest that for the next year beginning October 1, 1946 a provisional budget may be passed, which can be revised two or three months later when we are in a better position to do so. This provisional budget may be for Rs. 175,000. If this figure is accepted the actual budget estimates for various departments can be proportioned accordingly. Personally I do not think that in any event we shall reach this figure because it will take time to grow and probably Rs. 150,000 will be quite enough. But it is desirable, I think, to allow full scope for growth. It must be remembered that we have got an office in New Delhi now, which is likely to be expensive as all things in New Delhi are. Therefore I suggest that Rs. 175,000 be the figure provisionally fixed for expenditure during the coming year.

This should not include repairs or changes in Swaraj Bhawan which are likely to cost a considerable sum. We have asked for estimates from architects and engineers and this can be dealt with separately. I think that in any event the Swaraj Bhawan budget can be kept separate from our general budget. We have at present a sum of Rs. 9,382-8-0 earmarked for repairs to Swaraj Bhawan.

The budget for the volunteer department, though forming part of the general budget, might also be kept separately. We have at present Rs. 10,000 earmarked for this. This will certainly cover the year's expenditure.

So far I have dealt with the estimates for expenditure. The income side is always vague and indeterminate. Our normal income from delegates fees, provincial contributions and A.I.C.C. membership is Rs. 20,000. If an annual session is held, as it is bound to be normally within the year, this might add considerably to our income. For the rest we have to rely on donations and purses, as well as such capital as we may possess. We have now received back from the Government Rs. 73,000 which had been confiscated. I do not think we need worry very much about the income provided our work is good and produces results.

**28. To L.N. Renu<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
5 August 1946

My dear Renu,

I have received your letter of the 16th July. I am dealing with the industrial cooperatives organisers you have trained, and have written to the various Congress Governments on this subject, more specially the U.P. Government. I fear that most of our people have yet to understand what industrial cooperatives are.

I am prepared to help you in spreading this movement, but I do not see what your proposed all-India association can do in this matter. A few persons in each province will not be able to do much without effective backing. I think the best way at present would be for some of our Provincial Governments to get moving. I shall try my best to do this. It may be necessary, however, for you or someone you can suggest for the purpose to travel about and interview the Ministers concerned.

I shall be in Bombay on the 15th of this month and shall stay four or five days there. Come and see me then.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

**29. The Inner Weakness of the Congress<sup>1</sup>**

The Committee have a heavy agenda before them—not only a long one full of difficult questions. They will naturally give first thought to the primary question before them—the political and economic situation in the country and the steps to be taken in regard to it. Many other important matters have to be considered.

1. Note written for the members of the Congress Working Committee, Allahabad, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 2)-1946, pp. 1-7, N.M.M.L.

Perhaps basically the most important is the question of revitalising and disciplining the entire Congress organisation. All of us know that while on the one hand there is great enthusiasm in the country and the hold of the Congress on the public mind has never been so great as today, yet at the same time the inner weakness of the Congress is more obvious today than it has been at any time during the past quarter of a century. There is a big hiatus between its prestige and its working capacity. Faction grows and the time of most Congressmen is spent in elections or party faction. The organisation, big and powerful as it is, is not big enough or effective enough in the present context. It is amorphous and loose and looking in many directions and doubtful of itself. While there is a great deal of talk of constructive work of various kinds, precious little is done.

It would be an interesting and profitable task to analyse this situation and the inner weaknesses of the Congress to seek their causes and to suggest more remedies. It does little good to say that others are to blame. In any event we have to face the consequences and perhaps we are also partly responsible for these consequences. Those who have to shoulder the responsibility for guiding and directing the Congress cannot escape by casting the burden on others.

The purpose of this note is not to examine these causes or to enter into an intricate analysis. Its object is the much smaller one of how to deal with the Congress organisation so that it may be in a better position to deal with the internal and external problems that face it. Everything ultimately depends on the strength and efficiency of the organisation. Probably the only effective approach is to change the Congress constitution, which has become out of date and unwieldy. That has been on our agenda for a long time but it can only be finally tackled by the full session of the Congress.

The Congress organisation means many layers of committees. The top can make a difference, but direct work is done by local committees under the guidance of the provincial Congress committees. Any reform must therefore start from below though the initiative for it may and should come from the top.

The A.I.C.C. office cannot make a vital difference unless the provincial and local committees get moving. Yet the A.I.C.C. office can do something worthwhile if it is properly organised and has a good and efficient inspectorate.

During the last three weeks those in charge of the A.I.C.C. office have given much thought to this matter and have frequently conferred together to discuss various proposals and suggestions. The General Secretaries, new to the office, have moved cautiously but have been full of ideas and eager to



put them in practice. Shri Sadiq Ali, who has thus far been called the Office Secretary but whose correct designation should be Permanent Secretary, has been a tower of strength with his long experience of working the office. At my suggestion the General Secretaries have presented a large number of notes on various existing and proposed departments. I am not circulating all these notes to members but they are all available for reference, should any member desire to see them.

While I agree with the general trend of these notes and feel convinced that the time has come for the A.I.C.C. to develop its activities and expand its office, I realise that expansion should depend on the availability of good human material. It is no good adding second-rate men or women to our staff. I think, therefore, that the process of expansion will necessarily be slower than we at first imagined. But I would like to have the views of the Working Committee on the general policy of expansion. For my part I feel convinced that we must necessarily expand if we are to play our role effectively or be worthy of the high tasks before us.

Among the departments that need special development are:

1. Congress organisation: This is of primary importance and I think it should be separated from the general office. It should have a number of competent inspectors. At present we have only one and he has done good work. Apart from engaging additional inspectors we should tour continually and send reports. I should like some members of the Working Committee to take charge, on our behalf, of one or more provinces for this purpose. In addition to these, some ex-members of the Working Committee should also be requested to undertake this work. I should like also that Shri Sadiq Ali, who has too long been confined to office work, should devote at least half his time to touring, inspection, meeting provincial workers etc. My idea of inspection is something much more than mere inspection and reporting. Shri Sadiq Ali can be spared for this work now as the General Secretaries will spend most of their time at headquarters. They will of course also tour when necessary but it is better for them to remain at headquarters during the period of office re-organisation.

It is for the Working Committee to consider whether it is not desirable to have a small committee to help in Congress organisational work. This will certainly be worthwhile provided it can meet easily and visit Allahabad frequently.

2. Foreign department: This should include overseas Indians as a section. It is not necessary at present to have a separate department for overseas Indians. Certain proposals have been made in regard to

foreign publicity which will come up separately before the Working Committee.

3. Labour: We have no such department at present but in view of the changing economic situation and the wave of strikes, it seems necessary for us to have one.

4. Congress Governments : The A.I.C.C. office must keep in intimate touch with the work, difficulties and achievements of the Congress Provincial Governments. Some such department is essential.

5. Constituent assembly : We have already opened an office in New Delhi in the charge of Shri Krishna Kripalani, and this will deal especially with work for the constituent assembly.

6. Volunteers: A volunteer department has also been started. This is in the charge of Major General Shah Nawaz Khan. It is proposed to have a women's section attached to it. The actual work of volunteering will of course be done locally and through provincial Congress committees. The A.I.C.C. volunteer department will guide, advise, direct, help in training, and inspect. Our policy will be to work through the P.C.C.s as we feel that Congress volunteers in any province should either be directly under the P.C.C. or recognised by them and in some way affiliated to them. Certain difficulties have occasionally arisen in regard to the organisation of I.N.A. volunteers. If these are under P.C.C.s then no difficulty arises. Otherwise they will have to be considered as outside organisation.

7. Women's department: This has been in existence. It should be expanded.

There are at present two other departments or sections—library and economic and research. The library has to be expanded and properly catalogued. I am asking the economic and research section to prepare a monthly note on the economic condition of India for circulation among members of the Working Committee.

I propose also to have a monthly report on the state of the Congress organisation.

We must have Urdu and Hindi sections and we propose to develop them.

Whether we should have a special minorities department dealing with minority problems as well as tribal problems and excluded areas is for the Working Committee to consider. I think it would be desirable provided we get good men or women to run it.

As regards foreign publicity and contacts the time has come when we have to think in a large way. How exactly we should deal with countries like the U.S.A., China and the Far East, Indonesia etc., is not clear

to me at present. We may put proposals before the Working Committee at a subsequent meeting.

A proposal has been made to me to start an Arabic section to deal with Egypt and the Middle East. This can be organised without much expense (the person in charge being an honorary worker) and I am in favour of it. But its success would necessarily depend on the interest and cooperation of Maulana Azad.

These are some of the proposals that we have been considering in the A.I.C.C. office. There are others also and new ones are continually being made. It is difficult, and perhaps not desirable, to lay down hard and fast lines which might limit the growth of a living and expanding organisation.

The expansion involves additional expenditure. I do not think it considerable considering the work before us or the high objective we aim at. Expenses have gone up inevitably because of the necessity of raising the salaries of the staff. We have already done so in regard to the lower paid staff but for some of the relatively higher-paid personnel we should like to have the sanction of the W.C. Provisional budget estimates have been prepared for the W.C.'s approval. The expansion of the office and the necessity for providing housing accommodation for the staff has compelled us to take on rent some additional small houses. Swaraj Bhawan, though big, is not big enough for our purposes.

Swaraj Bhawan itself requires extensive repairs and renovation. This is something apart from our normal budget and I think we should deal with it separately. It is proposed to build a small guest house in the Swaraj Bhawan garden. Since the death of Shri Jammalal Bajaj there has been a vacancy in the Board of Trustees of Swaraj Bhawan. The Working Committee have to fill this. The trustees have, I am afraid, seldom met. I hope they will take their responsibilities more seriously in future. I would suggest that we might add two members to the managing committee from Allahabad. This will facilitate meetings and supervision. The General Secretaries will of course remain in general charge in accordance with our rules.

The Working Committee have heavy work before them at this meeting and I do not know if they will have the time or inclination to consider in any detail the various points raised in this memorandum. I suggest that a small committee might be formed for this purpose. This can meet at Wardha during the intervals of the Working Committee meetings and make its recommendations to the Working Committee.

I think it will be desirable to give some latitude to the General Secretaries and the Permanent Secretary in the matters. Most of us are busy with important work and can hardly spare the time to look into them.

The Working Committee should lay down the general principles and leave it to the A.I.C.C. office to work them out.

### 30. The Creation of a Minorities Department<sup>1</sup>

The question of minorities needs particularly delicate and careful handling. Any plans made by the Congress to promote understanding and cooperation among the various communities are liable in the present situation to be misunderstood, to lead to much unprofitable and misleading discussion in the press and to provoke, instead of allaying, suspicion. But there can be no doubt that a great deal of useful work has been done by such constructive programme organisations, as for instance the Harijan Sevak Sangh, and by a large number of Congress workers and that an organised and disciplined effort would give much bigger results. 'To a large extent, communal bitterness is merely a symptom of the economic and political backwardness of the country, and will tend to disappear with political freedom and economic security. 'This is, however, not a good reason for making no serious effort now. I feel that much useful and necessary work can and should be done. 'The problem has become urgent because of the alarming growth of communal and sectarian feeling among Congressmen themselves, to which I have referred in my note on the Congress reorganisation.

I would, therefore, suggest that a minorities department be opened in the A.I.C.C. office. Its functions would be :

1. To give publicity to the work done by constructive programme organisations, Congress workers, and Congress governments to promote goodwill and friendliness among communities, or for the uplift of backward communities such as the Harijans, the backward tribes etc.
2. To popularise such work among Congressmen and guide and co-ordinate their activities.
3. To suggest ways of preventing the growth of communal and sectarian feeling among Congressmen.
4. To study the problems of minority communities, both in their broad all-India aspects as well as specific local problems, and to help

1. Note, 6 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (part 2)-1946, pp. 67-69, N.M.M.L.

in solving them, especially the latter. Sometimes local disputes, unwisely handled, assume grave proportions.

5. To take up such other work as may be suggested by the minorities sub-committee proposed in my note on the Congress reorganisation of departments.

### 31. To Yogendra B. Sinha<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
6 August 1946

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

I have read your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 6th August. I do not know all what transpired in Bihar in regard to the elections to the constituent assembly, and so I can express no opinion about them. There are always such unhappy contests during elections that good people are left out. That is our experience everywhere. In fact many good people do not choose to stand at all. You know that my views are that women should be encouraged in every way to take part in our public life. I was very favourably impressed by the very brave speech which Mrs. Ram Dulari Sinha<sup>4</sup> delivered at the A.I.C.C. session. I did not agree with all she said; but that makes little difference.<sup>5</sup> I am sure that she will make good if she persists and will be an acquisition to our national movement. It does not really matter very much who goes to the constituent assembly or who does not go. There is unfortunately a certain tendency all over India, and even in the Congress, to bypass women in politics. We shall have to get over this.

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40-1946, p. 195, N.M.M.L.
2. Congress leader of Muzaffarpur district.
3. Yogendra B. Sinha wrote that the claims of women with records of sacrifice and qualifications had been ignored in the choice of candidates for elections to the constituent assembly.
4. (b. 1922); member, Bihar Assembly, 1952-57, 1969-77; member, Lok Sabha, 1962-67; Labour Minister, Bihar Government, 1971-77; State Minister of Labour, Government of India from 1980.
5. Yogendra Sinha thought that Ram Dulari Sinha had not been selected as a candidate for the constituent assembly because she had opposed the resolution in the A.I.C.C. session in Bombay in July 1946 to enter the constituent assembly.

I do not know if there will be any vacancies in the constituent assembly and if so how they will be filled. There is no provision for it yet.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 32. The Need for a Labour Department<sup>1</sup>

I have read General Secretaries' Note.

I think it is certainly necessary for the Working Committee to lay down its general policy regarding labour, strikes, etc. But I doubt if anything very specific can be said or done. The subject is a very complicated one and varies in different provinces. It is being dealt with by provincial governments and I have some communiques on the subject issued by the Bombay and U.P. governments.

Still I think that the Working Committee should issue some general statement of policy and some guidance for Congress workers. I have asked Shri Gulzari Lal Nanda to send me a draft statement for the Working Committee.

As regards strikes I have found it very difficult to frame any general rules which might apply to all. Obviously we have to discourage sudden and unauthorised strikes, also those which have no real basis. We must encourage in every way reference to arbitration and adjudication. Indeed there should be clear legislation to this effect.

The Congress is naturally inclined to sympathise with strikes. That is right. Yet it is obvious that sometimes strikes are premature or even ill-conceived and organised chiefly with the object of creating trouble. We have to distinguish.

I think Congressmen should be asked not to associate themselves or join fronts on such matters with non-Congressmen.

In strikes and other matters communal considerations have to be borne in mind. Allahabad has had communal trouble as a consequence of strikes.

I am not clear about our developing an elaborate labour department in the A.I.C.C. office. This is partly because too many new persons

1. Note, 8 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 69 (Part I)-1946, p. 93, N.M.M.L.

in the A.I.C.C. office will come in each other's way and not do effective work. Also because we are not likely to have first-rate persons in charge and without them our work also will be second-rate; still something has to be done in developing this department.

I think we should express our approval of the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh.

### 33. The Freedom of Goa<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee have not expressed their opinion previously in regard to Goa and other Portuguese possessions in India as they were convinced that the future of these enclaves would inevitably be determined by the future of India as a whole. Freedom for India would necessarily mean freedom for Goa, for it would be impossible for any administration in Goa to maintain an oppressive and dictatorial regime denying civil liberties and exploiting the people there when the people of India had tasted of independence and democratic liberty.

Recent events<sup>2</sup> in Goa, however, have compelled attention and brought to light the extremely backward state of these Portuguese possessions. Economically the people of these possessions have been reduced to poverty and degradation; politically they have practically no rights and even the most elementary civil liberties are denied. The fascist, authoritarian administration of Portugal functions in a peculiarly oppressive way in this very small colony, which once was rich and prosperous and a centre of commercial activity and now is deserted, with its people migrating elsewhere in search of a living.

The nature of the present administration of Goa is exhibited by the sentence of eight years' transportation to Africa passed by court martial on Mr. Tristao Braganza Cunha, a well-known citizen and public worker

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal for the Congress Working Committee, 11 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G. 44-1946, pp. 1-3, N.M.M.L.
2. The people of Goa had been for some time agitating for civil liberties. In June 1946 Rammanohar Lohia who had gone to Goa to address meetings was arrested and deported. In protest hartals were held in Goa and the movement was gaining strength with the rise in repression. Meanwhile the Portuguese Government arrested and transported Braganza Cunha to Portuguese East Africa.

of Goa, for the offence of challenging the ban on public meetings. The present movement in Goa is entirely confined to the peaceful assertion of the right to civil liberties and yet it is met by fierce repression and trials by courts martial and deportation to the Portuguese possessions in Africa.

In justification of this policy of the administration, the Portuguese Governor of Goa has issued a statement<sup>3</sup> which is unbecoming in tone and objectionable in regard to its pretensions. Goa has always been and must inevitably continue to be a part of India. It must share in the freedom of the Indian people. As to what its future position and status will be in free India, this can only be determined in consultation with the people of Goa and not by any external authority.

The Working Committee have noted the difference between the attitude of the Portuguese in regard to their Indian possessions and the policy enunciated by the Governor of French India, who stated recently that the people of French India are free to decide their own future and may, if they so choose, join an Indian Union. The Committee welcome and appreciate this statesmanlike expression of policy on behalf of the French Government.

The Working Committee understand that Portugal has applied for membership of the United Nations Organisation. The Committee are of opinion that it will be improper and against the basic principles of the U.N.O. to admit to their membership a country which has an authoritarian and reactionary administration and denies democracy and civil liberties and which, in its colonies, carries on the worst form of colonial rule. They trust, therefore, that Portugal will not be admitted to the U.N.O.

The Committee send their greetings to the people of Goa and express their sympathy in their struggle for the establishment of civil liberties.

3. On 30 July 1946, the Portuguese Governor in Goa stated that Portuguese India was not a part of the Indian continent but was "an undissociable cell of the Portuguese motherland", and that Portuguese rule in India was "an unmixt blessing".



34. To Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>

Wardha  
August 10, 1946

My dear Jayaprakash,

Mukutdhari Singh has given me your letter and has also shown me some other papers. The story you unfold is almost incredible. Indeed if you had not written it I would have found some difficulty in believing it. I know Abul Bari of old. I know also that his methods are rough and tough. Still there is a limit even to roughness and what you write passes that limit. Jamshedpur has long been notorious for the violence and rough methods of labour workers. Homi excelled in this and then came Bari who opposed him and beat him at his own game. Certainly I shall look into this matter and do what I can. You are perfectly right in telling your people not to retaliate in kind. For the present I am writing to Bari and I shall pursue this matter further.

You had told me that you would visit me early this month in Allahabad. I was looking forward to meeting you and was disappointed, for there is a great deal I want to talk to you about. We are living in rather strange times which cannot easily be measured by normal methods. I hope you will give me an early opportunity of meeting you. I cannot tell you what my own programme is likely to be except that I go to Bombay on the 14th and stay there for four or five days. Then Delhi or Allahabad.

It is quite possible that there may be curious developments in the future and it is desirable that at least you and I should understand each other. I should have liked you to be present here at the Working Committee meeting, but I wanted to have a talk with you previously. That did not come off.

I have been reading your articles in the *Janata*. They are helpful in many ways but, to be frank with you, they seem rather vague and not definite enough.

I shall not write more now but I do hope that I shall meet you soon.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

### 35. To Abdul Bari<sup>1</sup>

Wardha  
August 11, 1946

My dear Bari,

I have received a letter from Jayaprakash Narayan in which he gives an account of his own experiences during his recent visit to Jamshedpur. He also gives some account of recent happenings there involving violence, kidnapping and all manner of strange doings against his colleagues in Jamshedpur. These accounts are supported by other statements and by a notice circulated in your name on the occasion of his visit to Jamshedpur.

I shall not go into any detail of all this, but I want to tell you that the whole story has astonished me beyond measure. It is a matter of deep pain to me that you should be associated with these violent and vulgar happenings. I would not have believed all this but there is sufficient evidence and Jayaprakash is a person whose word has to be believed. It is immaterial whether one agrees with him or not in any political or other matter. His position in India, and in the Congress especially, is at the top and he is respected by friends and opponents alike. That such a person should be treated in the way he was in Jamshedpur by you is just too surprising and shows that there is something radically wrong about our politics and labour work. I am quite certain that our public life cannot continue if this kind of thing goes on. You hold a high position in public life and in the Congress and naturally large numbers of people will look up to you for guidance. If the guide fails what are the followers to do?

Jamshedpur, from the days of Homi onwards, has been notorious for the roughness and violence of its labour activities. I had hoped that with the elimination of Homi this would improve. But thus far that hope seems to have been in vain. What does it matter if we control a labour union or a Congress committee if the standards we set besmirch our work and our cause? I would beg of you to give earnest thought to this matter. I am deeply troubled about it. In the A.I.C.C. office we receive inspection reports from various provinces. The report from Bihar is one of the worst of all and it is very sad that a province which was in the forefront of our work and struggle should have fallen so low. You are an acting president of the Bihar P.C.C. It is up to you to try your best to improve conditions there, so that Bihar might recover its fair

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

name. I should like to meet you and discuss all these matters with you but I am uncertain of my programme. I might even try to go to Bihar. Anyway we shall meet before long.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**36. To Damodar Swarup Seth<sup>1</sup>**

Wardha  
August 12, 1946

My dear Damodar Swarup,

We have all rather been put out by your reported resignation from the constituent assembly. How that resignation can take effect now I do not know. But what I am more concerned with is the principle involved. You not only stood willingly for election but you were on the small committee which chose all the candidates for the province. And now because of some mandate from outside, you and some others suddenly resign. This is very unfair. Then again you are the president of the U.P.P.C.C. It was in that capacity that we put you in that small committee. As a member of the council and the P.C.C. I have a right to ask, can you resign without reference to that council and the P.C.C.? This matter raises an important question of principle and unless we decide this now we are likely to have a good deal of trouble in future.

There was another matter about which I wanted to write to you. You know that a branch office of the A.I.C.C. has been opened in Delhi. And this is at present located at 19 Windsor Place which has been allotted to you. We went there because Aruna Asaf Ali told us on your behalf that we could go there. We were under the impression that we had got your permission. I hope you will have no objection to our staying on there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-40-1946, p. 369, N.M.M.L.

**37. To Sheodas Daga<sup>1</sup>**

Wardha  
August 14, 1946

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your telegram. I do not know what clarification you require regarding foreign cloth distribution. Our general policy is to ask people not to use foreign cloth etc., but there is no question of picketing any shop at present. It is not clear as to who is distributing this foreign cloth. We should concentrate on constructive activities and the production of khadi as well as on general propaganda. There is at present a great lack of cloth in the market. The question of foreign cloth importation is one for Government to deal with.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. President, Raipur District Congress Committee.

**38. To Kailas Nath Katju<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
19 August 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,

I see from the papers that you are introducing some kind of a bill in regard to industrial disputes. I have not seen this. In Wardha we had a long discussion about labour matters. The Working Committee attach the greatest importance to a coordinated effort on the part of Congress governments to deal with this problem. It would be unfortunate if each province functioned separately and without considering what other provinces were doing. In fact we came to the conclusion that Ministers dealing with industries and labour matters should confer together soon and probably our Parliamentary Committee will write to the Ministers concerned on this subject.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Probably the Bombay Government has to deal with this problem more than any other and they have the greatest experience. Gulzarilal Nanda is our best expert on this. He is introducing a new bill which is a considerable improvement on the last Bombay Act on the subject. It would be desirable for you to get hold of this bill and try to profit by the experience of the Bombay people.

It is obvious that we have to deal with a very difficult situation. It is not merely a question of employer and employee, but of economic factors like inflation and rise in prices which continually upset any equilibrium that you may seek to establish. The matter is thus to be viewed in all its aspects. In Madras also Giri is introducing some kind of legislation. All this should be coordinated.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 39. To T. Prakasam<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
19 August 1946

My dear Prakasam,

I enclose a newspaper cutting.<sup>2</sup> I was surprised to read this for a variety of reasons. First of all the letters I send to Prime Ministers are personal and confidential and it is not proper that publicity should be given to them. Secondly the type of publicity that has been given is completely unwarranted. I sent identical letters to all the Congress Prime Ministers drawing their attention to various matters. This had nothing to do with the particular problems in a special province or with the way they had been handled by the Government. The other Prime Ministers took my circular letters in this light. None of them gave publicity to these letters or considered them as anything more than general directions and suggestions.

You will appreciate that it becomes difficult for me to send even personal letters to Prime Ministers or others if these are used publicly for other purposes. To say that my letter was one of appreciation or of compliment is surely very wide of the mark and such use of it must necessarily be objected to. I get inquiries from people as to what I

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A news report dated 10 August 1946 stated that Jawaharlal had praised Prakasam on the various beneficial schemes sponsored by his ministry in Madras.

had written and the occasion for doing so. Am I to publish my personal letters in answer to these inquiries or to explain all the circumstances in which they were written? Surely it must have been obvious to you that the letter I sent you was a kind of circular letter to Prime Ministers. It is possible that I might send more letters of this kind. They have to be treated as confidential. If I write to you particularly on some matter affecting Madras, the contents of the letter will make it clear. I am not in a position to appreciate or criticise what your Government has done as I haven't got all the facts before me. I might mention, however, that a number of complaints have come to us which have been referred to our Parliamentary Committee. I am told that some letters sent to you by Sardar Patel have remained unanswered. The manner of nominations to the Upper House in Madras seemed to us rather extraordinary.<sup>3</sup> Your recent scheme for encouraging hand-spinning and khadi production, the giving of a contract for a very large number of charkhas to a single individual also seemed odd.

Madras Congress politics have, as you know, given us a lot of trouble and they have to be handled with great care. Also while each province has its particular problems, there should obviously be as large coordination as possible in policy and practice among the various provinces. It is for this purpose that the Parliamentary Committee has been constituted and it is desirable, therefore, for provincial governments to keep in constant touch with the Parliamentary Committee as well as the A.I.C.C. office.

One special matter I should like to mention to you. I understand that Giri is going to introduce some labour legislation. Giri is a good man at the job and I have no doubt that he will do it well. But in labour matters specially there should be a common line of approach because the problems are really all-India ones. It is, therefore, the opinion of the Working Committee that an early meeting of Labour Ministers in Congress Governments should take place to adopt a common line of policy. The Bombay Government has probably given more thought to labour questions than other governments and it would be desirable to keep in touch with Bombay's labour policy.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. It was said that Prakasam had allowed, without effective protest, the Governor of Madras Province to make seven out of nine nominations to the Upper House to represent non-Congress sections.

4. Prakasam replied on 27 August 1946 that the statement in the newspaper cutting was false and that Jawaharlal had been misled about the khadi scheme.

**40. To Secretary, Jammu Congress Committee<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
21 August 1946

Dear friend,

I should like to draw your attention to the recent resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee in regard to Congress committees in States. It has been made quite clear in this resolution that political and preliminary work should be carried on by Praja Mandals and local States people organisations and not by Congress committees. Therefore Congress committees should cooperate with local States people organisations in such matters, leaving the general direction to them.

I understand that in October next there will be elections in Kashmir State for the State Assembly. The Kashmir National Conference is going to run candidates for these elections. Your Congress committee should cooperate with the National Conference and help them and should not run separate candidates.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-16-1946, p. 69, N.M.M.L.

**41. To Mridula Sarabhai<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
22 August 1946

Dear Comrade,

I enclose a telegram received from Guntur and my reply. I want you to communicate immediately with the various parties concerned, the Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, the Guntur District Congress Committee, and others, and inform them of the present position.

First of all the setting aside by the Working Committee of recent elections held in Guntur district does not mean a revival of the old committee or committees which existed prior to the elections. Those committees are dead and cannot be revived. Therefore the present committees recently elected might continue to function even though that

1. A.I.C.C. File No. P. 28(II)-1946, pp. 77-79, N.M.M.L.

election has been set aside. This will be so till new elections are held which should be done as soon as possible under the supervision of the A.I.C.C. inspector and Shrimati Kamaladevi appointed by the Working Committee. It is open, however, to the Andhra P.C.C. to make temporary arrangements for the carrying on of district Congress work in supersession of the present committees. It is not necessary to do so unless the P.C.C. thinks it desirable. It should be made clear, however, that the committees which have been set aside now cannot function in the municipal elections or in any other matter involving important commitments. They can merely carry on the day-to-day activities till they hand over to the newly elected committees.

In view of the new situation that has arisen owing to the setting aside of the Guntur district elections, I have advised that Congress committees in Guntur district should not officially run candidates for the local board elections. Congressmen may, however, stand for election as individuals without any party backing. It is obvious that the committee that has been set aside cannot run candidates and there is no other. Therefore the only course left is for elections to be contested on an individual basis.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 42. The Significance of the August Movement<sup>1</sup>

We shall solve the terrific problems that face us, because we have developed the strength and confidence to do so. We shall gain freedom from all foreign control.

It is a more difficult matter to gain freedom from internal obstruction, inhibition, prejudice and outworn ideas. Yet that, too, we will ultimately gain, because I believe that India has a new vitality which nothing can suppress.

But much will necessarily depend on the path we choose and the methods we adopt. If that path is crooked, it means not only delay, but certain degradation. If that way is one of tall talk and strong language

Message to *Forum* (Bombay) for its August anniversary number. From *The Hindu*, 25 August 1946.



only, without constructive effort and discipline, that also means delay and superficiality.

I emphasise the importance of discipline, unity of effort, hard work and long perspectives. Thus we will justify 1942 and put finishing touches in the months to come.

The history of the Congress is the history of the freedom movement in India, beginning in a small way, gaining strength and tempo till ultimately it reached the heights of 1942. The 1942 movement was a fully matured freedom movement in which the masses showed their capacity for organised action and sacrifice even though bereft of their normal leadership.

#### 43. To Kailas Nath Katju<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

My dear Kailas Nath,

During my brief stay here various rumours about the appointment of the next Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court have reached me. I know nothing about this matter or about the merits of the persons concerned. But I do feel, agreeing with you, that all appointments of judges etc., should be considered by the Provincial Government. In this matter of the Chief Justice if you think that there is anything for me to do at the Delhi end you might let me know. Merits apart, it is obviously undesirable to push on English people here.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

#### 44. To Thakur Sinhasan Singh<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

Dear Thakur Sinhasan Singh,

Your letter of the 1st July. Regarding purses and money received by Congressmen, the Working Committee recently passed a resolution. This

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

was to the effect that all such purses publicly presented should not be treated as private property but should be handed over for some public purposes. Further that full account should be kept of public funds. Even when money is given at the discretion of the donee, this money must be utilised for a public purpose. It is open for a person to help his friends privately with money but this does not apply to purses publicly collected.

All money raised for I.N.A. must be sent to the I.N.A. Committee in the U.P. and all I.N.A. camps and activities must be carried on under the direction of the I.N.A. Committee.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 45. To Lala Duni Chand<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
August 26, 1946

My dear Lala Duni Chand,<sup>2</sup>

I received your long letter and read it carefully. 'There can be no doubt that the Congress in the Punjab has been in a sorry state all these years and during the last general elections there was much that was unsavoury that came out. I agree with many of your criticisms.

What you say about Dr. Satyapal surprises me. I am not concerned with his motives but by the fact that at a critical stage he deserted the Congress, went completely against our declared policy and joined the military when we were asking men not to do so. It is totally immaterial to me why he did so. If, as you say, it was pique, that is strange justification for a responsible Congressman. Many Congressmen have been put out of the Congress for much less indiscipline. I have no doubt that Dr. Satyapal has been guilty of gross indiscipline and violation of Congress policy and as such he has no place in any Congress elective body at present until such time as may be laid down by competent authority. In fact in the U.P. the question would not arise at all as he would be automatically debarred.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1873-1965); prominent Congress leader of the Punjab; arrested in 1922, 1930 and 1942 for participation in the freedom struggle.

**46. To Damodar Swarup Seth<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
August 30, 1946

My dear Damodar Swarup,

Thank you for your letter in which you have explained about the constituent assembly. That matter has now been settled satisfactorily and nothing more need be said about it...

I am sorry to notice that party rivalry is again raising its head in the U.P. I hope you will meet the situation with tact and patience. I wish I was there but I cannot leave Delhi.

As regards the next Congress session, I am quite clear that it should be held in Meerut.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

**47. The Nomination of Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>**

Mr. P.H. Patwardhan<sup>2</sup> has sent me his resignation from membership of the Congress Working Committee because he felt that he should devote himself more to Congress work in Maharashtra. In the vacancy so caused I am inviting Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan to fill it and he has accepted my invitation. Therefore I nominate Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan to be a member of the Working Committee.

I regret that Mr. P.H. Patwardhan has had to leave the Working Committee, though we both realise that this is in no way a parting and that we shall have his full cooperation in our work in future. During his brief period in the Working Committee he has impressed all his colleagues with his ability, earnestness and vision and the Committee and

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 31 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 1 September 1946.
2. Brother of Achyut Patwardhan and a Congress leader of Pune; left active politics after independence and worked in Vinoba Bhave's Bhodan movement.

the organization as a whole will undoubtedly take full advantage of these qualities of his.

At the time the Working Committee was being formed after the last A.I.C.C. meeting, it was my desire to have in the Committee Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan and Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia. They felt at that time, however, that they could do more useful work outside the Committee. I had, therefore, regretfully to leave them out. The Committee as formed, even during this brief period, has done a great deal of work and has faced many vital problems. The new secretaries, Mrs. Mridula Sarabhai and Mr. Balkrishna Keskar, have applied themselves with vigour to the great task of strengthening and tightening up the Congress organisation. The A.I.C.C. office is being expanded and many new departments are being created there. We are inviting the full cooperation of the provincial Congress committees in this important work and we are glad that this is forthcoming because Congress work ultimately has to be done by the provincial Congress and local committees. I should like to express my appreciation of the work done by the new General Secretaries and Mr. Sadiq Ali, the Permanent Secretary of the A.I.C.C.

It is manifest that the Congress has to face now not only many of its old problems but several entirely new problems. We have grown in strength and with this has come greater responsibility. The formation of the provisional government brings new questions before us which will have to be tackled with foresight and care. It is essential that during this tremendous period of transition to full independence the Congress organisation should function with solidarity and efficiency and should do its utmost to serve the cause of the people of India, including all classes and communities. It must be our especial endeavour to win over by our service those groups or communities who are apprehensive of the future that is taking shape. We must always remember that the Congress has stood for and stands today for the good of every one in India and it can never look at our problems from a narrow party point of view. In the unfortunate communal tension that exists today the responsibility that the Congress shoulders is all the greater. We have to show by our acts that we are not swept away by any passion or prejudice but that we act always for the good of the whole and with a broad vision including every one in India. In order to achieve this, it is essential that Congressmen and Congresswomen should put aside their party rivalries and function together. I welcome therefore particularly the inclusion in the Working Committee of Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan, who represents a viewpoint held by a considerable number of Congressmen and whose ability and record of service in the cause of India's freedom has given him an outstanding position in our public life.

I earnestly trust that the Congress organisation will rise to the occasion and show itself fully capable by its discipline, spirit of cooperation and capacity for service to meet the challenge of the time and thus take India rapidly to the goal of freedom and independence which has inspired us for all these years.

#### **48. The Importance of Propagating Congress Objectives<sup>1</sup>**

Till the interim government is set up and for the period of the constituent assembly, it is important that appropriate publicity should create a suitable atmosphere and provide a background which should inspire the people of India as a whole to continue to have confidence in the Congress; should help the constituent assembly to deal with the delegation of powers to the Indian union in a liberal spirit; and should keep the communal question in its proper place. If some Indians think in terms of sectional, provincial or communal politics, the task of the Congress, the constituent assembly and the interim government would become extremely difficult. It follows that a well organised and coordinated inter-provincial Congress publicity is an urgent necessity.

As to the aims of publicity I should like you to think over the matter, but generally speaking it seems to me that fissiparous and disintegrating forces (e.g. communal, party, feudal, class, caste, etc.) which weaken national unity and strength should be countered. Congress ideals need to be reiterated and the feeling against foreign rule maintained in order to prevent minor issues and petty rivalries from occupying the stage. In this context it would be helpful if the emergence of India as an independent country and its importance in South East Asia were stressed so as to shift the emphasis from smaller to larger problems. Then there is the communal problem. It seems necessary to publicize specific measures adopted or intended for the protection and amelioration of all minorities and particularly Muslims as a cardinal principle of Congress policy. In this connection what has been done in one province should be made known elsewhere. An attempt might be made to remove

1. Undated letter to the Prime Ministers of Congress provinces and Presidents of provincial Congress committees, written from Allahabad some time in the first days of September 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25-1946, pp. 253-258. N.M.M.L.

Muslim fears and counter atrocity stories made current by the League. It would be useful if publicity could be given to the harmful aspects of Pakistan ideology, partition of India, two-nation theory, compulsory grouping, weak centre, appeal to powers outside India, etc. In this connection emphasis might be laid according to conditions prevailing in your province on economic as against communal-cum-political issues as the real issues to be faced by all communities together.

In order to carry out coordinated publicity it would be necessary to have a publicity organisation. It may be possible to use the official machinery to a certain extent, and where that is not possible, the provincial Congress committee might engage a small staff. The importance of having publicity officers has already been mentioned to provincial committees and I hope that, if action has not already been taken, it would be taken now. Material specifically prepared by selected writers on the above lines might be usefully supplied to the press. Speakers may be provided with specially prepared talking points, background material and guidance notes. It has been suggested that we might hold an all-India exhibition of the Congress struggle of 1920-46. For this purpose provincial committees might consider collecting material by way of photographs, etc. I will see if I can get prepared pictorial posters which would be sent to provincial committees for being printed locally with captions in local languages and distributed throughout the provinces. Short films can be utilised as well because the Central Government have ceased to provide and distribute them. After September next all provinces except Bengal and Sind could by arrangement with the Central Cine Corporation of Bombay show compulsorily 1000 feet of short films and newsreels approved by them. This would require coordinated action by all the Congress provinces.

I shall be glad to have your views on the suggestions made and to know how you propose carrying them out. I shall be pleased to assist you in any way I can. I have mentioned this matter to the Working Committee and they are generally in agreement with me and feel that we should make a beginning as early as possible.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**BEYOND INDIA**





## 1. Colonialism Must Go<sup>1</sup>

'The future of the colonies? The obvious answer is that there is no future for them as colonies, that the whole system known as colonialism has to go. It has to go for a variety of reasons. It is evident that the dependent peoples of the colonial empires are in a rebellious mood and cannot be suppressed for long, and every attempt to suppress them is a drain on the ruling country which weakens it.

It is even more evident that the old-style empires are decadent as empires and show signs of cracking up. In some instances, indeed, they have cracked up and the attempts that are being made to pin together the broken pieces show a lack of wisdom and statesmanship which is amazing. One decadent empire tries to help another still more ramshackle empire and in this process speeds up the process of its own dissolution.

All these are signs of an inevitable change and transition from an era of colonialism to another era which has yet to be given a shape, a form and a name. The fundamental fact behind all this is that colonialism is obsolete in the modern world and does not fit in with the political and economic structure that is gradually evolving.

The problem of the colonies and dependent countries thus is a vital part of the world problem, and an attempt to isolate it results in other problems becoming far more difficult of solution. Behind that problem today lie the passion and hunger for freedom, equality and better living conditions which consume hundreds of millions of people in Asia and Africa. That passion cannot be ignored, for anything that drives vast numbers of human beings is a powerful factor in the dynamics of today.

But essentially it is not the sentimental appeal to freedom that is so important as the lack of food, clothing, housing and of the barest necessities of life which lies behind that urge. This lack can no longer be made good even in part by continuation of colonial administration in any form.

The problem should therefore be considered apart from sentiment in the wider context of world problems, political and economic, because the peace and well-being of the world depend to a large extent on its solution. Colonies and dependencies have been fruitful sources of conflict in the past between acquisitive powers and expanding economies.

1. Article written by Jawaharlal and published in *The New York Times Magazine*, 3 March 1946.

They lead to an accentuation of power politics. If internal conditions in different countries are in a state of continuous tension and conflict they spread their contagions outside and affect world peace.

It may be difficult to do away with power politics entirely, for they represent to some extent the reality of today trying to find a new equilibrium. But it is certainly possible to lessen their importance and to reduce the area of potential conflict. The elimination of colonialism and imperialism would certainly have this effect and thus help in solving the other major problems of the age. Any variation of the old theme of a covering up of old processes under new names would have the reverse effect and add to the bitterness and conflict.

Effective war today means total war, drawing upon the entire resources of the nation. Effective peace and solution of national and international problems demand also a comprehensive and cooperative effort not only on the part of governments but also on the part of the people. Any lack of cooperation between the government and the people leads to failure. There can obviously be no cooperation between an alien and authoritarian government and the people, and hence no proper solution of any problem.

This has been evident in India for a long time past and problems have accumulated till they seem to be almost insoluble. The war accentuated this progress and the Bengal famine was a terribly tragic reminder of the chaos and incompetence that is called government in India today. We are now facing another crisis on an even bigger scale and the shadow of widespread famine darkens the land.

No alien government can deal with this situation satisfactorily, nor can it have the cooperation of the people which is so essential both from the psychological and practical points of view. This is not the game of politics, but something that deeply moves masses of our people. We have seen this government going from disaster to disaster and making a mess of everything.

It is not an easy matter to refashion the destiny of hundreds of millions of people. The uprooting of the British empire, as of other empires, which is happening before our eyes, is bound to lead to numerous upsets and it may take some time to establish a new equilibrium on a surer foundation. The problem of the future of colonies and dependencies is no doubt difficult, as is every major problem today. And yet it is essentially simple, or rather the first big step is a clear renunciation of colonialism and imperialism and recognition of the national independence of the dependent countries within the larger framework of the world order that is slowly evolving. It is only after that unequivocal declaration has been made and immediate steps taken to implement it that other questions can be discussed as between equals.

We do not want any lowering of standards anywhere, even where they are higher than ours. We want to raise our own standards to the highest level. But it is obvious that high standards elsewhere based on an economy which results in low standards in Asian and African countries cannot be allowed. If the people of any country can maintain high standards by their own productive efforts they are welcome to do so, but such standards must not be at the expense of starvation and misery elsewhere.

Indeed low standards and the burden of poverty will tend to pull down standards in other places and will also disturb the economy and peace of the world. We have to aim at the raising of the level of the common man everywhere and for that purpose we have to pay special attention to Asia and Africa which have suffered most in the past. The world has to pull together or not at all.

India is inevitably the crux of the colonial problem by virtue of her size and population, her millennia of cultured life, her contribution to civilization, her capacity and vast resources, her potential power and her strategic position. Historically she has been during the last one hundred and fifty years the classic land of colonial imperialism.

Because of her dependence other countries, notably those of the Middle East, have suffered subjection so that the routes to India might be protected and insured for imperialist purposes. The freedom of many other countries thus depends largely on the freedom of India. With India free the old imperialism ends and world politics refashion themselves in a new, stabler and more peaceful context. But it must be remembered that there are no halfway houses to freedom or independence and any attempt to limit freedom will result in conflict.

India has her internal problems largely owing to the arrested growth of a hundred years and more. They are difficult problems, essentially economic problems, and they are insistent and urgent. They cannot be dealt with by the British or any other authority at the top, cut off from the people. Nor can they be made excuses for the postponement of independence, for freedom is the prerequisite for their solution. Delay will lead to conflict and disaster and an intensification of those very problems and will affect the political and economic structure of the world.

In Indonesia we have been witnessing a clear case of a shattered imperialism trying to hold on with the help of another imperialist power. Here is a country well capable of looking after itself, with a functioning government which has obviously the support of the mass of the people, where there would certainly be peace and security if outsiders did not intervene.

It is only then that the foundation can be laid for friendly and co-operative relations between the opponents of yesterday. Everyone realises that independence today cannot and must not mean isolation or an absolute independence. Everyone knows, or should know, that the only hope for the world lies in cooperation and interdependence and the building up of a world order of free nations. It is in this context that the independence of the nations that are dependent today is sought.

It is also realised that there should be no monopolies in materials or markets or in the natural resources of the world. These should be shared equitably for the advantage of all. But it must be remembered that the peoples of Asia and Africa have been exploited and deprived of their natural riches and resources for many generations, and others have profited enormously by these one-sided transactions. It has to be remembered that this had resulted in terrible poverty and backward conditions. The balance has to be righted. The break-up of the old empires based on colonial economy may lead to harder conditions and life and to somewhat lower standards in the countries which have so far been dominant and have drawn upon the resources of their dependencies. In the long run this should not be so as new techniques are adding tremendously to the wealth of the world. But in the near future some falling back seems probable.

The story of Indonesia during the past few months has been fantastic and significant in the extreme and the part the British have played there has injured them more than they perhaps realize. The independence of Indonesia has to be accepted and the government recognised.

So also in Indo-China. This principle has to be applied to all Asian countries under subjection as well as to Egypt, which should be freed from external control.

The only limiting conditions should be those which apply to world peace and economy, for no country can be allowed to be a law unto itself so as to endanger world peace or to monopolise what is meant for the world. There would be little difficulty in discussing these conditions on the basis of national freedom and independence. But the discussion has to take place in a world context and in a world forum and not for the private advantage of this or that nation.

In certain parts of Africa it may perhaps not be immediately possible to establish independent states of the kind mentioned above. Even so, independence in the near future should be aimed at and a large measure of it granted immediately, with suitable provision for rapid advance in education, economic and allied fields.

A free India will link together the Middle East with China. India is so situated as to form the center of a group of Asian nations for de-

fence as well as trade and commerce. Her cultural contacts with all these countries date back thousands of years. Already there is considerable talk about a closer union between the countries in the Indian Ocean region, which would include Australia and New Zealand. It has been proposed that a conference of representatives of Asian countries should be held in India.

This is not immediately feasible owing to governmental travel restrictions, but it is likely to be held as soon as conditions permit. There has already been favourable response to the proposal.

The freedom of colonial and dependent countries will raise many new problems, internal to them as well as external. But there can be no doubt that this would be a powerful stabilizing factor in the world and would tend to reduce the conflicts inherent in power politics by removing some of the major causes. These countries, with their newly achieved freedom, will be intent on their progress for they will have to make up for lost time. Their weight will always be thrown on the side of world peace, for any war would be disastrous to them. India in particular is wedded to peace, and her powerful influence will make a difference.

If, however, freedom is delayed or circumscribed and colonies and dependencies are used as pawns in the game of the power politics of a few great powers, then these dependent or semidependent countries will also play their part in power politics to the extent they can, and side with this or that power as suits their convenience and advantage. They will add to the confusion and chaos of a distracted world and be victims, together with others, of the inevitable disaster.

The end of colonialism and imperialism will not mean the splitting up of the world into a host of additional national states intent on their isolated independence. It will lead to a new grouping together of all nations, a new outlook, to cooperation gradually replacing competition and conflict, to the utilisation of the wonders of modern techniques and the vast sources of energy at the disposal of man for the advancement of the human race as a whole. It will lead to that one world of which wise statesmen have dreamed and which seems to be the inevitable and only outcome of our present troubles, if we survive disaster.

## 2. Indo-Czech Friendship<sup>1</sup>

I retain vivid memories of my visit to Czechoslovakia in the summer of 1938. Those were critical days and I had occasion to watch the Czech people facing a crisis. I admired them then for the calm and courageous way in which they behaved when disaster faced them. I admired them still further when, deserted by their allies, they actually met disaster with courage. Since then much has happened and the Czech people have passed through several years of agony. Now at last they are again a free people, but the burden of these years has been heavy. I have no doubt that they will make rapidly good again and play an important part in the rebuilding of the shattered world. I hope that there will be the friendliest of relations between the people of India and the people of Czechoslovakia. Most questions today go beyond national boundaries and are international in their context. In this international field also I hope that a free India will cooperate with a free Czechoslovakia.

1. Message given to a Czechoslovak press correspondent, Calcutta, 7 March 1946. From *Anurita Bazar Patrika*, 10 March 1946.

## 3. The Tragedy of the Jewish People<sup>1</sup>

No man who is at all sensitive can fail to be deeply moved by the tragedy of the Jewish people. I earnestly hope that some status, fair to all concerned, will be found to give relief to a people who have suffered and are still suffering in such a terrible measure.

The long past of this race was itself a tragedy, but recent years have overshadowed everything else and language itself fails to express the sense of numbness one feels at the torture and extermination of vast masses of people. There is sympathy and goodwill of course, and at the same time, a sense of helplessness at not being able to do anything effective to solve the problems which have become terribly intricate.

1. Message given to S.S. Silverman, Chairman of the World Jewish Congress, who read it at a press conference in Bombay, 7 March 1946. From *National Herald*, 8 March 1946.

#### 4. The Vision of a New Transformation<sup>1</sup>

It is usual, I believe, for those whom you invite to address this convocation to prepare a written address for the occasion, and it is right that they should do so, for it is no light responsibility to have to address chosen people who represent this oldest of the new universities of India. I have to crave your indulgence and to ask for your forgiveness for not having followed this prescribed routine. More or less, I am a slave of circumstances and ceaseless activities. I find it difficult to have time to sit down and prepare a written record of what I have to say. So I have come to you as I am, without the written words in my hands, and you should take me at that.

I must also ask your forgiveness as I am not able to address you in the beautiful language of your province which I should certainly have done if I have known it sufficiently.

Since I received your invitation I have wondered what I should say to you, for I am no expert in academic matters. In various subjects you have so many specialists and others who know a great deal about these matters, but who possibly know little about anything else. That, I believe, is the definition of specialists.

I cannot talk to you about academic matters, nor is it fitting that I should talk to you about matters which engage my day-to-day attention. I speak many times in a day about subjects which are rather superficial. They relate to passing problems and passing needs of the moment. It is fitting that on this occasion we at least should think of deeper matters and wider issues.

You all realise that we stand today all over the world—in Asia, in India—facing an extraordinary crisis in human affairs. You read about critical situations arising in political, economic and other domains. You read about wars, disasters and the possibility of coming wars. We know, of course, that we have been living on the verge of a precipice. Nevertheless, I wonder if you have the same feeling that I have about all these. It seems to me that there has hardly been any time in recorded history when humanity has to face such an enormous possibility of changes and conditions as we face today. My limited knowledge of history does not give me any parallel to it.

We are apt to attach no importance to what we see, hear and feel.

1. Convocation address at Calcutta University, 9 March 1946. Based on reports from *Hindusthan Standard*, 11 March and *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 11 March 1946.

Nevertheless, I do feel that we are living during a period of enormous transitions and vast changes when possibly the whole structure of human life will be changed, when the human mind itself may undergo transformation. This is a great event that we are living on the verge of such mighty changes. We see all around us dramas being enacted, which, however, often end in tragedies.

We are on the brink of a volcano and sometimes we may topple over. All these may be to the liking of some, and others may be afraid of them. Whether we like it or not, there is no escape for this generation, possibly for the next generation, from the changes that are coming.

I want you to consider our problems with this background. There are going to be enormous political and economic changes all over the world. If one thing is certain it is this that the political and economic structure of the world which has led to so many disasters during the last quarter of a century has failed, and, if it is not changed completely, it will fail again and again. The present structure has failed politically and economically for the modern world and modern problems.

If you think of attempting to face modern problems, of preventing war and having peace you will have to refashion the world. If that re-fashioning is to be still based on the old structure—political or economic—inevitably it is bound to fail again.

The history of the world between the periods of the two big wars is a record of such a failure. True, people tried and tried honestly to solve the problems of the age, but always on the basis of the political and economic structure which they thought should continue and could continue. They failed in spite of their earnestness because nothing could be built up on that perishable structure. We had another war and the strange aspect is that in spite of this tremendous disaster there is no sufficient realisation of the fact that their failure was due to a political and economic structure that is still carried on. I am wholly convinced that this can lead to a fresh disaster, unless there is a radical change in that structure.

When I speak to you about political and economic matters, I do feel that the crisis of today is something deeper than that—call it psychological, call it spiritual if you like, or something in the spirit of man himself—I cannot define it or tell you more about it. It seems to me that the world today is going through a deep spiritual crisis, not in the narrow religious meaning of the word—because you know I am not a man of religion—but in another sense, in a larger sense. All of us, whether individuals or groups, or as nations, or taking humanity as a whole, have to face the great crisis. What the outcome of that crisis will be, I do not know, but I believe out of that crisis will come a great



transformation of the human race, which seems to be overdue. This is a big question about which I have little competence to speak to you. It is for you to realise, specially those who are younger among you, that you stand on the verge of great happenings, which may even lead you either to disaster or to a new and brighter phase of human existence.

Let us come to narrower issues, to our own country, to Asia. If we look back to our history we will find that for some time, hundreds of years ago, a change took place in the historic scene, when Europe, which was an outgrowth of Asia, began to play an increasing role in the affairs of the world. Then it began to play an aggressive part in Asia. The centre of world events shifted to Europe during the last two hundred years or so. In the last two hundred years, Europe played a dominating part in world history, not merely by force of arms, but also by virtue of its thought, its science and many other qualities the people there possessed. Undoubtedly, Asia went down or ceased to play any effective part in history because of the lack of these qualities. It seems that Asia became utterly static, unchanging, unmoving, or at any rate, ceased thinking in terms of changes.

Now, what do you find happening today? You find a shifting over of the centre of events of the world from Europe to other parts of the world, to America certainly, there being a vital and young race in the new world, and partly to Asia, where the process of transformation is slower. Obviously, you will find that in future the seats of trouble, as well as seats of progress, are going to be more and more in Asia.

Europe today is a shattered continent with many valiant people in it. Most of the countries in Europe, due to fall in birth rate alone, are hardly likely to be aggressive in the future. There are certain fundamental urges and pushes which make a country and a people take to aggression.

One of the fundamental reasons for an aggressive tendency has been this rapid growth of population which has taken place in Europe during the last hundred years. During the last quarter of a century it has gone down. Whether there is a natural cycle for that I do not know. I simply mention this as a fact. Because of their falling birth rate, the European countries have lost one of the major urges of aggression. It would be difficult for them to keep up their standard of living.

It seems to me that Europe will, no doubt, continue to play an important part in world affairs because of its high culture and the high standard of living. Nevertheless, Europe is moving away from that stage. America is undoubtedly there.

On the other hand, Asia is gradually and fairly rapidly coming back to where it was some hundred years ago. I do not know what exact

shape it will take. I am not thinking in terms of military power. Military power alone cannot be responsible for the growth of a nation, because military power depends ultimately on the development of technical knowledge and science. I am not thinking so much in terms of military power, because we have arrived at a stage when if countries continue to think in terms of military power they are likely to destroy themselves completely. Some solution other than that of military might has got to be found.

So, I am thinking rather in terms of a vital energy which takes possession of people and pushes them on and on, and they begin to develop in all the various departments of human life and activity. I feel that in India, and in a large part of Asia, we have lost that vitality which we possessed long ago in an abundant measure.

We want to regain that lost vitality. I believe we are, however, regaining that vitality, because we are now becoming fundamentally more vital. I believe there is some kind of a cycle and Asia is going to play a big part in future in world affairs. I believe India will play a very big part too. Normally our wishes and desires largely influence our affairs so much. But let us look at the problems objectively.

There is a certain compulsion of geography about it. There are also many other compulsions. Do you realise that one of the principal results of the coming of the British to India was the cutting off of India almost completely from all its neighbours in Asia? We were isolated. But India, for thousands of years, had numerous contacts in East, South West, South East and North East Asia. Now, with the coming of the British the landways were completely closed and seaways were controlled by the British and such contact as we had with the outside world was through Britain mostly. We went away from Asian countries. We became nearer to some places in Europe than to our neighbours. That is an extraordinary thing to happen and it produced all manner of other results in the way of our thinking. Again, you find now a big change and a transformation happening, that is, we are developing our old contacts with Asian countries, whether in Western Asia, or China or South East Asia, which still resemble India in many respects. That shows you how a new situation is gradually developing and India, by virtue of its geographical position, is inevitably connected with the whole Indian Ocean region, with South East Asia, Australia, New Zealand and right up to the Persian Gulf and the countries on the western side.

If you look at this from the point of view of strategy, you will find that no defence system for the huge Indian Ocean area can be built up unless the centre of it is India. Without India you cannot properly defend South East Asia or without the cooperation of India you cannot defend

the western part of the Indian Ocean region. India is so strategically situated that every system of defence must be based on India. Trade in the Indian Ocean region must largely depend on India, which will surely become a great trade centre in Asia. Given certain assumptions that we have a policy to carry on in India all these necessarily follow.

All manner of arguments arises about the nature of our freedom, about Dominion Status, independence and the rest—they are words which may have a lot of meaning, or none at all.

The point is that India, which has influenced very greatly a large part of Asia, if not the whole of it, has been looked upon as the mother country by its neighbours. Even now the old memories survive in many parts. Many countries look up to India as their cultural mother country. So the position of India can never be that of one appended to any other country.

Now it is a subject country. As soon as it moves out of the orbit of subjection, it immediately comes to a new position of having not only independence, but in a sense to the former intimate relationship with all the countries round about it.

When India is free it is for India to choose its friends and colleagues. It is again for India to decide what its future outlook or foreign policy should be; and of course, internal policy.

India fortunately is a country which has stood more than any other country in the world for peace. Therefore, when we think of peace, it is not with a view to having an alliance with this group or that country as opposed to any other group or country, because every intelligent person realises that if there is going to be any real peace and progress in the world, it must be on the basis not of a military alliance of big groups facing each other but of some kind of a world order, some kind of world Commonwealth growing up, of which all the countries will be free members.

So I want you to think in terms of a renascent Asia and a new India playing a very important role, inevitably situated so as to form a connecting link between the various parts of Asia, Middle East, South East, with which we had so many contacts in the past. This does not mean that we shall not be bound to other countries, because India is bound to stand for peace.

Now, as I said at the beginning, we stand on the verge of a big transformation. Transformations take place because of many reasons, known or unknown. But, obviously, the human material behind the transformation counts. It is the function of big universities to train that human material. How far it is being trained I do not know. What we are thinking of is not so much a change which suddenly upsets the

government but changes in the fundamental structure of society. How far are you being trained for that? How far are you being trained to be capable of building a new India, not that of the distant future, but of tomorrow?

You know, in our country, specially in Bengal, how much attention is paid to professions like the legal profession, which has attracted young men and which is an absolutely unnecessary profession. You know also how little attention is paid to other branches of education. Probably, the Calcutta University is more advanced and has more varied curricula than other universities in India. Nevertheless, I wonder how far is your University thinking of the new India to be. We talk, of course, of Indian freedom and Indian independence, but do you visualise the kind of new India you want? Unless you have a certain picture, unless you have a certain philosophy of life, how can you train the people?

Therefore, it becomes necessary to be clear in mind as to what kind of social structure you are going to have and as to what kind of society you are aiming at in so far as you build on the distorted social structure of today.

The Bengal famine is a ghastly reminder of the fact—quite apart from governmental incompetence and other weaknesses—that the present social and economic structure has broken and it cannot last. The structure has been shattered to pieces. You cannot put it together simply by putting some ministers here and some others there. You have to build something entirely new. So think in these basic terms. Think of the new India which may be taking shape sooner than many of you imagine. You may not be able to have an exact picture of that, for nobody knows what is going to happen in India when 400 millions of people will suddenly experience the sensation of freedom. They can do what they like, no one knows. I have myself no idea. But we know the direction in which one has to go and one can prepare for that. Obviously, you will have to face the immediate problems of feeding, housing and clothing these 400 million people. Whatever the philosophy of your life you have to deal with these problems. Otherwise your own government will be swept away. A foreign government can continue for some time, not for a long time, but no Indian Government can continue even for a day after the occurrence of such a calamity as the Bengal famine. How to solve these problems? You will have to solve this problem by well-thought-out processes of production and distribution. May be, your plan is not perfect, but you must have the issues clear in your mind.

I consider myself a socialist and agree with the fundamental outlook of socialism. But leaving aside your 'isms' for the moment, I want you

to consider the problems even more practically in terms of feeding, clothing and housing the 400 millions, giving them medical aid, education and all their necessities of life by a proper social and economic structure. It is a vast problem. Personally I believe these problems can be solved and will be solved, though not without difficulties. If you have got to solve all these problems you will require trained human material. How far are our universities training human beings in this context? I do not know. Probably, Calcutta University is doing more than other universities in this respect. But your approach, obviously, must be fundamentally an approach of science. Now, science is the god mother of the modern world as it is largely the outcome of the applications of science. No country can understand the modern world without coming closer to science. At the same time it is also true that with all its tremendous growth and change science does not follow a definite aim in life. It can be diverted to any course, good or bad. It is soulless and spiritless. It may be that science has developed no certain ethical standards or values.

Nevertheless, it is science on which the world is based. You cannot do without science. Therefore, it becomes necessary for every university, for every seat of learning, to pay greater attention to every department of science and to the latest developments of social science.

Therefore, it is necessary for every university to produce also trained men who can immediately be used in building up a new India. You have, of course, training classes for electrical, mechanical engineering etc., but I believe some other subjects have not yet engaged your attention. I may ask you, are you training planners and architects? We want them by hundreds and thousands. Engineers, technicians and other trained men are also required in large numbers.

In other words, I call upon you to think in terms of building up a structure of a free India of tomorrow under which the 400 millions can live. You must also remember that you have to think in terms of that now reviving relationship with other countries. Free India will want contacts with other nations of the world, more especially with those of Asia. What are you doing in producing men, who can be sent as our ambassadors of goodwill to other countries? They will have to be specially trained for such foreign assignments. They will have to know languages other than English, and other than our own languages. They will have to get some diplomatic training. If we have a sufficiently trained nucleus of men and women for all these various activities we can expand that nucleus rapidly, when time comes. If we have not any nucleus it will take many years and we shall have to start from scratch.

So, I want you to think of these wider problems even when you are

lost in the controversies of the moment. It is obvious that the period of history that we have passed through — these 150 years of British rule — is coming to an end. It is obvious that the British empire in India is fading away, more or less has faded away. India will have to function according to its own ability and strength. Prepare for the future, keeping this vision of a free India and Asia and a new world before you. I do not know how many of you will see the full realisation of this vision.

It is not that I am talking of a new India in terms of political independence alone, for that I take for granted. My vision of a free India is something bigger, more magnificent than just political freedom. It is a freedom in which 400 millions should live the life which man should live, in which every man and woman should have the door of opportunity open to him, in which every individual gets his necessities of life. Then you will have leisure to explore other regions of science and the mind can start again on the great field of adventure of man, which started in this country so many thousand years ago. We will leave behind the past and, with hope, march in that adventure again which has no end. The process of marching onward will give us some satisfaction that we have functioned in our brief life as we should function. *Jai Hind.*

## 5. The Palestine Problem<sup>1</sup>

The question<sup>2</sup> of Palestine is one of the problems of the modern age, which seems to grow more difficult with time.

An outsider must be hesitant, and yet the broad facts are clear enough. The basic fact is that Palestine has long been an Arab country with a majority of Arab population. No solution which is not approved by

1. Interview to the press, Calcutta, 11 March 1946. From *The Bombay Sentinel*, 12 March 1946.
2. In Palestine, the Arabs were unwilling to give any portion of their land to the Jews on the basis that Arab Muslims had lived there for more than 1300 years and the Jews were immigrants who had settled later. In 25 years, the number of Jews in Palestine had increased from 50,000 to 600,000.

the Arabs can be a fair or stable solution. Hence, with all our sympathy for the Jews, there has been a considerable unanimity of feeling in India that the Arabs of Palestine must not be coerced against their will, and that Palestine as a whole must inevitably remain predominantly an Arab country, as it has been for so long.

If the question is tackled by the Arabs and the Jews of Palestine without any foreign intervention a solution might have been found. I cannot venture to suggest a solution, nor can any outsider do so, but perhaps the development of the idea of autonomous regions within Palestine or a larger Arab federation might be a solution.

I have sympathised with the Jews in their tragedies of recent years, and have been a witness of some of them also. I know that the Jews in Palestine have a notable record of constructive effort which made many parts of the desert blossom. Their endeavours have raised the standard of living of the people of Palestine and attracted a large number of Arabs from neighbouring countries. All this is to their credit. But all this does not take away from the fact that the future of Palestine cannot be based on the coercion of Arabs in any way whatever. The Arabs and the Jews have lived for long peacefully together, and there is no reason why they should not do so in the future and cooperate in the development of Palestine and raise the level of the masses of the inhabitants.

Unfortunately extremist considerations, supported largely by British imperialist demands, have led to the intensification of the problem. I can understand the passionate desire of the Jewish race for a homeland. But surely there can be no homeland at the expense of the homeland of others. It is strange that while there is so much sympathy for the Jews all over the world, that sympathy is not translated into action.

At various conferences it was made clear that no country was prepared to give free access to the Jews. They all advised others to do so and many gave the Arabs the same advice, because it did not affect them at all. This kind of vicarious advice is significant. Why should the Arabs do something which no other country is prepared to do?

It must be remembered that while technical skill is necessary for the growth of a nation, even more so is the sense of freedom. And if the Arabs lose this sense of freedom material advantage would not be worthwhile. I see no reason why this freedom should not be joined to technical skill and material advantage for all concerned.

## 6. Free India's Foreign Policy<sup>1</sup>

Question: What position might independent India take in the event of a Russian military movement southward in Iran,<sup>2</sup> and if Russian demands on Turkey<sup>3</sup> were to be pressed?

Jawaharlal Nehru : Indian opinion, as a whole, will strongly resent any aggression against Iran or Turkey by any power. The big powers are still at the old imperialist game, which led to two world wars. They have not learned anything from the tragic history of the past and, if they do not learn soon, they will again plunge the world into disaster.

There are many seeds of conflict and war, but certainly the principal one is the subjection of one country by another. If one great power dominates another, the other follows suit immediately, for fear that the former may gain an advantage, and so the mad race will go on.

News from the Middle East and from Turkey has been confusing. There is a general impression in India that we have been getting one-sided news. It appears that in Iran the old contest for the possession of oil by rival powers continues. Iran has become the plaything of these rival powers, and there is much concern in India about Iran's fate.

On the one hand, there is Soviet aggression, on the other, there is the desire of Britain, not only to hold on to oil, but also to preserve the so called lifelines of its empire. Rival Iranian groups are exploited by either party. The real solution of this problem must be preceded by a complete renunciation of imperialism, and of the domination of one country by another. Foreign armies must be withdrawn from subject countries. Then the United Nations Organisation should consider how the world's resources could be utilised equitably for the benefit of all countries, for there should be no monopoly of essential goods of common need.

Interview to the press, Bombay, 15 March 1946. Based on reports in *The Bombay Chronicle*, 16 March and *The Hindustan Times*, 16 March 1946. It was reported on 12 March 1946 in the newspapers that Soviet armed forces and heavy military combat equipment were moving south from the Soviet frontiers towards Teheran and the western borders of Iran.

Turkey's pact of neutrality with the Soviet Union, concluded in 1925 and reaffirmed on 25 March 1941, expired at the end of 1945. In 1946 the Soviet Union demanded from Turkey strategic bases in the Dardanelles and the exclusion of all non-Black Sea powers from the administration of the Straits.



The recent United Nations Organisation Conference in London was a significant indication of the trend of events.<sup>4</sup> It is a task for statesmanship to stop the deterioration of relations, but this cannot be done just at the top level. The basic causes must be tackled. Today it is difficult for one power to criticise another, because its own hands are not clean, and it gets the obvious retort.

Every country, in the final analysis, puts its own interests first when it reviews an international situation. Obviously India will be attracted more to those countries which support its cause of independence and progress. Its general policy is sure to be one of promoting world peace, preventing aggression anywhere, and helping, in so far as possible, in the attainment of freedom by the subject countries of Asia and Africa. It will try to maintain friendly relations with all countries, and help in evolving a world order. More particularly, it will inevitably have closer contacts with its neighbour countries. The Indian Ocean region depends for its defence greatly on India, which is strategically situated in the centre. Thus any defence arrangement for both South East Asia and the Middle East will partly depend on India. It is difficult to speak about the international situation in the future, but these considerations will generally govern India's policy.

**Q :** Would an independent India seek military alliance with Britain or other countries?

**JN :** We want to be friendly with the three principal powers — America, Russia and England — but this is possible only when India attains full freedom. We shall choose our own friends, and resist any imposition. It is impossible for me to say what military or other alliances a free India may approve. Generally speaking, it would not like to entangle itself with other people's feuds and imperialist rivalries.

**Q :** What would be the future of India's armed forces and their possible size?

**JN :** Presumably, India will maintain defence forces and, obviously, it will try to keep them as efficient as possible. The whole question of defence in future warfare is so much in a fluid state, owing to scientific developments, that it is difficult to prophesy about the future.

4. From 10 January to 14 February 1946 the General Assembly of the U.N.O. met in London.

## 7. Cable to Sultan Shahrir<sup>1</sup>

I have learnt through the press that you have been good enough to offer to send half million tons of rice from Indonesia to India to relieve famine conditions here provided the necessary shipping is arranged for. I understand also that you are in great need of textiles from India. We are grateful for your offer. Half a million tons of rice or other foodgrains would make a great difference to India in the months to come. Could you kindly let us have further details of your offer so that we can make arrangements in regard to it. There is cloth scarcity here also but I am sure the Government here will do its utmost to provide textiles in exchange for foodgrains. I shall be grateful for an early reply.

1. New Delhi, 20 April 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 8. To B.R. Sen<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 20, 1946

Dear Mr. Sen,<sup>2</sup>

Ratan Nehru has shown me your D.O. 238/S-46 dated the 20th April addressed to him. I have received no direct communication from Dr. Shahrir. Indeed it is difficult to get such direct messages. In the past some messages from Dr. Sukarno and other leaders of the Indonesian Republic have been conveyed to me either through the radio or sometimes through the press. It is possible therefore that Dr. Shahrir made some such offer addressing it to me, though I did not receive it directly.

It might be worthwhile in the circumstances for me to send him a message about this reported offer and ask him exactly what he means. I presume that this has to be done through the S.E.A. Command. I can send such a message to Lord Mountbatten and ask him to forward it. I was told in Malaya that I could do so and that they would forward

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); Director-General of Food, Government of India, 1943-46; Secretary to Food Department, 1946; Minister at the Embassy of India in Washington, 1947-50; Ambassador to Italy and Yugoslavia, 1950-51, 1952-55, U.S. and Mexico, 1951-52; Japan, 1955-56; Director-General of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation, 1956-67.

any message of mine. But perhaps you know of a better and speedier way. I am giving below a message<sup>3</sup> which I should like to be sent to Dr. Shahrir. I shall be grateful if you would have this sent by cable. If there is no other way, then please send it to S.E.A. Command with the request that they might forward it to Dr. Shahrir. I shall gladly pay the expenses incurred in this cable.

I am leaving for Bhopal early tomorrow morning. I hope to return to Delhi on the 23rd.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. The preceding item.

## 9. Dutch Apathy to India's Food Scarcity<sup>1</sup>

The statement<sup>2</sup> issued by the Dutch authorities in Batavia regarding Dr. Sultan Shahrir's offer of rice for India is very unsatisfactory. It is obviously based not on information but on various inferences unsupported by any knowledge of facts. What these facts are, probably no one knows accurately because of the unsettled conditions in Indonesia, and the difficulty of obtaining proper statistics. But of the persons concerned, the Dutch authorities are probably in a more unfavourable position to judge of the food situation than the Indonesian Prime Minister. So far as is known, the greater part of Indonesia is controlled by the Indonesian Republican Government. This includes most of the food growing areas. The Dutch occupy some towns and surrounding areas. The statement of the Dutch authorities refers to the official statistics for 1944. I do not know from where they have got these, for Indonesia was under Japanese occupation then.

At the very least the offer made by Prime Minister Shahrir is deserving of fullest consideration and inquiry. He has definitely stated that there has been a very good crop, and he should know. It is possible that the figure of half a million tons exportable surplus is not correct, but still there might very well be a substantial surplus of rice which can be sent to India. The casual way in which the Dutch authorities have

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 26 April 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 27 April 1946.

2. It was said that as the rice crop in Indonesia had been declining from 1943 there could be no export surplus of food for India.

treated this matter indicates almost a desire that any such deal between the Indonesian Government and India is not looked upon with favour by them and they want to come in the way. This is not the way of dealing with a terrible world crisis which is likely to affect vast numbers of human beings not only in India but all over Asia and Europe. Evidently political considerations have overridden human considerations. The Dutch authorities should know that we in India look to the Indonesian Republican Government as representing the Indonesian people and not the Dutch authorities. We hope the day is not far distant when this fact will be recognised by the world.

# 10. To Milo H. Fritz<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 May 1946

Dear Major Fritz,

Thank you for your letter of the 4th March which I have read with great interest. You will forgive me if I send you a brief reply.

Inevitably I have been changing and my views have been developing since I wrote *Glimpses* 14 years ago. To some extent my changed approach may be found in a new book that I have written called *The Discovery of India* which I hope will appear in America soon.

I have certainly been disillusioned to some extent by developments in Russia. I do not like much that has happened or is happening there. A great deal of good, I think, still remains, but there is far too much of pride of power and military might. In a sense that pride is equally evident in the United States of America. The world outlook is dreary. Perhaps all this is inevitable during this transitional period that we are passing through. It is a sad thought that we should go on repeating the same old mistakes in spite of past experiences of catastrophes.

Thank you very much for what you have written. It does cheer one to know that there are many people in all parts of the world with whom one can claim some kinship in spirit.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

<sup>1</sup> A copy of this letter is available in the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The identity of the addressee is not known.

## 11. The Withdrawal of the British Army from Egypt<sup>1</sup>

I am very glad to learn that the British Government have decided to withdraw unconditionally all their troops from Egypt.<sup>2</sup> From every point of view this is a wise decision. In times of peace the presence of such troops is a denial of independence and a constant irritant factor. In times of war a few troops here or there will make little difference, as everything is likely to be on a vaster scale.

Undoubtedly, the decision will have a good effect in India. So far as we are concerned, the final test of British withdrawal from India is the withdrawal of the British army. No country is free or independent so long as a single foreign soldier remains on its soil. That soldier is a symbol of foreign domination and certainly India is not in the mood to tolerate even symbols, much less the reality, of this.

Even from the point of view of defence, the presence of a relatively small British army in India makes no real difference. What will be essential in case of aggression is the organisation of a popular force to resist such an aggression. Without this, even a big army would fail. With this, a small army would go a long way. Again the presence of foreign troops would drag India into all manner of feuds with which it has no concern. So from every point of view, both India's and England's, the sooner British troops are withdrawn from India, the better.

1. Statement to the press, Simla, 8 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 9 May 1946.
2. As a prelude to the negotiations for a revision of the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936, the British Government decided on 6 May 1946 to withdraw its naval, military and air forces from Egypt.

## 12. To Lolong<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
10 May 1946

Dear friend,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your telegram of good wishes.

I have been receiving long letters about the difficulties of the Indonesian students and seamen and I have been asked to approach the Government

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. General Secretary of the Indonesian Youth Association of India in Bombay.

of India in regard to them. I am anxious to help, but it is very difficult for me in the present circumstances to deal with the Government of India in such a matter which concerns yet another government. Nor do I think it right or desirable to meet the Dutch Consul here. If I can do anything I shall certainly do it. Meanwhile, I may suggest to you and other Indonesian friends to keep in touch with Mr. Purushottamdas Tricamdas<sup>2</sup> of Bombay.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Secretary to Mahatma Gandhi, 1914; member, Congress Socialist Party, 1940-45; member, Bombay Legislative Assembly, 1941-52.

### 13. To Charles Onyema<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
14 May 1946

My dear Mr. Onyema,<sup>2</sup>

I was glad to get your letter. You will forgive me if I write briefly as I am full up with work here. But I want to tell you that, engrossed as we are in the future of India, we do not forget the people of Africa. We shall help them and stand by them whenever occasion arises.

Your question about nonviolence may be answered in many ways. But perhaps the most effective way is to say that you can only use guns when you have them. Also that bigger guns prevail and so you must take care to have the biggest guns. Normally the biggest gun or the latest weapon of offence is not available to the people.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. The addressee was from Nigeria.

14. To B.R. Sen<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 May 1946

Dear Mr. Sen,

I do not know how matters stand in regard to the question of rice or other foodgrains being received from Indonesia. You were good enough to send my telegram to Dr. Shahrir, the Prime Minister of the Indonesian Republic. To that I have had no direct reply from him. But I have seen a kind of a reply in the press in which he asserts again that he can supply the rice.

While you are no doubt taking official steps in this behalf directly or through S.E.A.C., it might be worthwhile for a non-official approach to be made to Dr. Shahrir. This could be done by someone going to Indonesia on our behalf. Instead of sending someone from India it would be easier and speedier to send a person from Malaya. I have just had a telegram from Singapore from Anand Mohan Sahai<sup>2</sup> offering to go to Java for this purpose if facilities are available. If there is any difficulty about him, somebody else could be selected for the purpose.

When Mr. Hoover<sup>3</sup> was here he mentioned that he had approached the Soviet Government and asked them to contribute to the food pool. I was wondering whether any direct approach of this kind had been made to Russia by the Government of India. I should think that such an approach would be worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1898); leader of the Indian national movement in the Far East during the Second World War; Minister and Secretary-General in the Azad Hind Government; Indian Commissioner in British West Indies, 1950-53 and in Mauritius, 1953-54; Consul-General, Hanoi, 1954-56; Ambassador to Thailand, 1956.
3. Herbert Hoover was in India for a day on 24 April 1946 and discussed with Jawaharlal the food situation.

## 15. The Plight of Indians in Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup>

I have been informed that a serious situation is developing in Ceylon as a result of certain contemplated action by the Ceylon Government in regard to Indians there.<sup>2</sup> Indian residents resent this greatly, and there is a talk of a general strike in protest.

It would be very unfortunate if, at this critical moment, the relations of the Sinhalese and Indians in Ceylon became more strained. I would earnestly request the Government of Ceylon to defer action and allow full time for consultation in the matter. Any precipitate action may lead to very unfortunate consequences for both parties concerned.

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 19 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 20 May 1946.
2. A new constitution for Sri Lanka was announced on 17 May 1946 which denied the Indian community equal rights, franchise and citizenship with the Sinhalese. Also at this time the Village Expansion Ordinance, which prescribed a domicile test, displaced a large number of Indian labourers from estates.

## 16. To R.H. Hutchings<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
May 19th, 1946

Dear Mr. Hutchings,<sup>2</sup>

I received your letter of the 18th last evening. I am happy to find in Dr. Shahrir's message confirmation of his offer of half a million tons of rice. I enclose a reply.<sup>3</sup> I shall be grateful if this is sent by cable to Dr. Shahrir.

You will notice that I have followed your advice and referred him to the Government of India and their representatives. I am also sending a telegram and an air mail letter to Mr. B.G. Kher, Prime Minister of the Bombay Government, suggesting that one of his colleagues in the Government might lead a delegation to Java for this purpose.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. (1897-1976); joined the I.C.S., 1920; Secretary, Food Department, Government of India, 1943; Member for Food and Agriculture, Viceroy's Executive Council, 1946.
3. See the following item.



I trust that the Government of India will take urgent steps and make the necessary arrangements for the matters referred to in your letter. You will of course take full advantage of the offer of the Shree Ambica Steam Navigation Co., Bombay, to place ships and aircraft at our disposal. I am sure the Scindhia Steam Navigation Co. will also help. So also perhaps Tata's. If you think this necessary I can communicate with them.

In my cable to Dr. Shahrir you will notice that I have mentioned the possibility of my going to Java. It is not easy for me to go away just at present but perhaps I can manage it for a few days. I am sure this would help greatly. I suggest that preliminary arrangements might be made for this so that there might be no delay. This would involve I suppose various references and the permission of different authorities. Could you help me in this?

If the Food Member or you would like to see me to discuss the matter I shall gladly meet him or you. My days are rather full up with Congress Working Committee meetings and other matters but the mornings or evenings are usually more or less free.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 17. Cable to Sultan Shahrir<sup>1</sup>

I am grateful to you for your message confirming offer of half million tons rice to Indian people. This splendid offer of help is greatly appreciated by our people and will further strengthen bonds between India and Indonesia. We shall try our utmost to supply you in exchange goods required by you. I am eager to visit Indonesia and shall do so as soon as possible. Meanwhile, in order to avoid delay suggest your dealing directly with Government of India and their representatives with whom I am in touch. I trust that one of my colleagues, a Minister of the Bombay Provincial Government, will lead Government delegation to Java for this purpose. All necessary steps will be taken speedily at this end. Our gratitude to you and your colleagues and assurances of our deep interest in the freedom and welfare of Indonesia.

1. New Delhi, 19 May 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**18. Telegram to B.G. Kher<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
19 May 1946

In view offer of Dr. Shahrir, Prime Minister Indonesian Republic, send half million tons rice India proposal send Government of India delegation to Java to make necessary arrangements. Suggest one of your Minister colleagues leading this delegation. Please wire your approval.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-55/1946, p. 17, N.M.M.L.

**19. Telegram to B.G. Kher<sup>1</sup>**

20 May 1946

Reference my yesterday's telegram. Java rice delegation postponed for present. Awaiting developments.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1 J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**20. To Vijayasinh Govindji<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
May 22, 1946

Dear Mr. Vijayasinh Govindji,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 17th May. I have already sent a telegram to you. I appreciate your offer of ships and planes very much. I have sent this on to the Food Department of the Government of India. I suggest that you might deal with them directly, in order to save time.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Of Shri Ambica Steam Navigation Company, Bombay.

**21. To R.N. Banerjee<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
22 May 1946

Dear Mr. Banerjee,<sup>2</sup>

I have received the following telegram from Major General Aung San of Rangoon.

Our hospitals as well as other sufferers need fruits urgently. Kindly convey India Government allow fruits export if not at prewar level up to some extent.

I wonder if you or your Department can do anything in this matter. Any action by the Government will be greatly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1895); joined the I.C.S., 1920; Secretary, Department of Commonwealth Relations, Government of India, 1944-48; Chairman, Union Public Service Commission, 1949-55.

**22. Burma's Appeal for Fruit<sup>1</sup>**

I have received a telegram from Major-General Aung San from Rangoon. He tells me that owing to the great dearth of fruit in Burma the hospitals there as well as people elsewhere are suffering greatly. He suggests that fruit might be allowed to be exported from India if not at the pre-war level at least in some measure. I hope that the Government of India will consider this matter favourably and permit some export of fruit to Burma. Such action would not only be humanitarian but would also help in bringing the people of India and Burma nearer to one another.

1. Statement to the press, 23 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 May 1946.

23. To B.G. Kher<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23 May 1946

My dear Kher,

Thank you for your letter of the 20th May. Yesterday I had a talk with the Member and the Secretary of the Food Department of India. It appears that there is some certainty now of rice being available in Java for India. The Government of India people are fixing up the details now. They seem to be earnest about it, but I place little reliance on their ways. They have sent a representative of their Food Department, whose name is Panjabi,<sup>2</sup> to Java. Panjabi has sent a detailed report which is promising. Arrangements have now to be made for the transport of rice to various ports in India, for its distribution in India, and for goods and materials to be sent in exchange. I am told that possibly 20 million yards of textiles may be sent, also agricultural implements and consumable goods. Dr. Shahrir would have liked to have more textiles, but he has generously left the matter in our hands.

Probably in the course of the next week something more definite will be fixed up. It would be desirable then for a delegation on behalf of India to go to Java to give the final touches to these arrangements as well as to convey our gratitude and goodwill to the Indonesian Government. The Government of India intend sending this delegation very early in June. You will probably hear from them. It is proposed that your Civil Supplies Minister should lead this delegation and I welcomed this proposal. I am glad you agree.

Apart from the technical and other details to be settled promptly on the spot I should like the delegation to convey to Dr. Shahrir and to the President of the Indonesian Republic, Dr. Sukarno, and the Vice-President, Dr. Mohammad Hatta, our deep gratitude for the way they have come to India's help at this time of crisis. Also to convey our goodwill and sympathy to the Indonesian Republic. Dr. Shahrir has been good enough to make the offer almost personally to me. I hope that my personal thanks and gratitude will also be conveyed to him.

Perhaps you know that a problem has arisen in regard to a considerable number of Indonesian seamen and students stranded in Bombay. The Dutch Government wanted to send them back to Java on one of their own ships, but the Indonesian people concerned did not want to

1. B.G. Kher Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. K.L. Panjabi (1898-1978); joined I.C.S. in 1923; served in various administrative posts in the State of Bombay; Secretary, Food and Agriculture Department, Government of India, 1941; Chief Secretary, Government of Bombay, 1956-59.

go back under Dutch auspices unless they were assured that they would have perfect freedom to join their own people. They were afraid that the Dutch might use them for other purposes. As that assurance was not forthcoming, they refused to go. It would be worthwhile to deal with this matter also in Java and find out what can be done about it. Someone in your behalf might find out what the exact situation is in regard to these Indonesian seamen and students in Bombay. The Dutch Government is difficult to deal with. They are very obstinate and foolish. I mentioned this matter the other day to the Viceroy and Mountbatten who was here for a few hours.

There were some Indonesians in Australia and I think they were sent back to their home country accompanied by an Australian officer. This was done to prevent the Dutch ill-treating the Indonesians in any way. Some similar arrangement might be arrived at here also.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 24. To Aung San<sup>1</sup>

23 May 1946

My dear Aung San,

I have just received your telegram about fruit being exported from India to Burma. I have sent your message to the Government of India. I hope something will be done in the matter to afford you relief.

I find from newspaper reports as well as from other sources that the situation in Burma is not improving. I am happy to think, however, that you are at the head of the movement there and can direct it along right lines.

We are taking some definite steps at this end to invite a conference of delegates from various countries in Asia. This work is being undertaken by the Indian Council of World Affairs. We hope to issue a statement soon. We want to prepare for this conference rather fully and this will take some time. Probably the conference will meet sometime in winter early next year. I hope you will fully associate yourself with this move.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 25. Indonesia's Offer of Rice<sup>1</sup>

I have refrained from saying much about the Indonesian offer to send rice to India as I did not want to raise false hopes in the minds of people. The time has come, however, when we can say with some confidence that this offer will materialise. Dr. Shahrir, the Prime Minister in the Indonesian Republic, was good enough to send me the following cable:

Dear Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, Will you kindly consider this letter as confirmation of news you read in papers about rice offer of Government of Indonesia to people of India. If you would not be able to grant Indonesian people honour of personal visit in order to discuss contemplated exchange agreement then we should be glad if you can send as quickly as possible authorised representatives to Indonesia.

Indonesians will keep ready for shipment to India a quantity of rice amounting to half a million tons. Every section of Indonesian community gives enthusiastic adhesion to plan. Transportation to ports in Java is guaranteed. For the sake of mutual assistance between two nations we should like to receive in exchange goods most urgently needed by majority of population e.g. textiles, agricultural implements etc. In case you cannot dispense with goods mentioned above on account of Indian people's own needs we should call ourselves fortunate if we can secure some other exchange. Moreover the goods mentioned before are to be understood as falling in category of articles of preference. We are quite prepared to consider any other kind of goods that happen to be at your disposal. We assure you that our people have given enthusiastic adhesion to plan mainly because we want to show our sympathy with your people by aid to prevent famine in your country. Sincerely yours, Shahrir.

Since then there has been further progress and arrangements are being made to take full advantage of Dr. Shahrir's offer and to send him instead textiles, agricultural implements and other goods. There is no doubt now that the rice is available and the only thing to be done is to expedite its despatch from Java to India and to distribute it properly. Also to send goods in exchange to Java which they so badly need.

I am sure everybody in India will appreciate and feel deeply grateful for the very generous offer that Dr. Shahrir has made on behalf of the

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 23 May 1946. *The Hindu*, 24 May 1946.

Indonesian people. That offer came from him unsolicited and he persisted in it in spite of all manner of discouragement. The terms of the offer and the language that Dr. Shahrir has used will go to the heart of the Indian people. It is the language of a friend and comrade, not out to bargain but to help in our time of need, even though he has to face a mountain of troubles in his own land. It is by such acts that nations and peoples are bound together. The Indian people will not only feel grateful but will remember this in the days to come. I hope and trust that it will be the precursor of a closer friendship between the two nations advantageous to both. I hope also that the Republic of Indonesia will emerge from its present difficulties free and triumphant.

I am afraid I cannot go to Indonesia for some time to come. But I hope to go there as soon as I can manage it and circumstances permit, so that I may convey personally to the leaders of the Indonesian people the gratitude and goodwill of the Indian people. Meanwhile I understand that the Government of India propose to send a delegation from India to Java at the beginning of June to settle finally all the details of this transaction. This delegation, I hope, will be led by Shri Desai, the Food Member of the Government of Bombay.

## 26. To Aung San<sup>1</sup>

25 May 1946

My dear Aung San,

I wrote to you two days ago in answer to your telegram about fruit. But as a friend is going back to Rangoon, I am giving this note to him for you.

About fruit I hope something may be done at this end. The Secretary of the Food Department of the Government of India told me yesterday that he was looking into this matter and he hoped to fix up something.

I wrote to you in my last letter about the proposed conference of representatives of Asian countries. I hope you and your organization will join this and will write to us about it. We want to make this conference really representative and to lay the foundations of some kind

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

of an Asian organisation. Preparations for it will take some time and we cannot meet earlier than next winter early next year.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**27. To Aung San<sup>1</sup>**

7 June 1946

My dear Aung San,

On my return to Delhi I have just received your telegram informing me that you had sent me no telegram for export of fruit. I was surprised at this. I received the following telegram on the 22nd May:

...Our hospitals as well other sufferers need fruits urgently. Kindly convey India Government allow fruits export if not pre-war scale up to some extent. Aung San.

Immediately on receiving this I communicated with the Commonwealth Relations Department of the Government of India. Later the Food Secretary of the Government of India met me and spoke to me on the subject. He said that they were trying to remove the ban. I suppose no harm has been done, but it is worth inquiring how any telegram should come to me in your name which was not sent by you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

**28. To R.N. Banerjee<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
16 June 1946

Dear Mr. Banerjee,

I wrote to you on the 22nd May conveying a telegram I received from Rangoon about the lack of fruit there. To this you sent a reply on the

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



24th May. I have now received another message from Burma on the same subject suggesting that the ban on the export of fruit may be removed or at any rate partially removed. I spoke on this matter to Mr. Hutchings, the Food Secretary, and he seemed to think that this might be done without any detriment to the food situation in India. I hope that it will be possible to do something in the matter.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 29. To P.R.S. Mani<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 June 1946

My dear Mani,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your letter of May 26th and have read it with interest. You are doing good work in Indonesia and I hope you will continue it. I wish we could send someone else to Java but at present I see no way to do it.

A few days ago a batch of Indonesian seamen left Madras for Java on the understanding that they would be allowed to go to the Republican areas.

I enclose a letter addressed to Dr. Mohammad Hatta which has been sent to me by his elder brother Mr. Darvish Arsjad, who is in Mecca. Will you please have this delivered to him? I enclose another letter making an inquiry about S.M.R. Manickam Pillai who apparently was lost somewhere in Sumatra. Could you find out about him?

I met Panjabi three days ago on the eve of his departure for Batavia.

Some of our friends in Bombay have offered 200 bales of cloth as a free gift to Indonesia. I have communicated this offer to the Government of India and asked them to make arrangements for despatch to Dr. Shahrir.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Special correspondent of the *Free Press Journal* in Batavia; after independence joined the Indian Foreign Service.

### 30. Racial Arrogance of South Africa<sup>1</sup>

India does not intend to recognise or submit to the theory and practice of racial arrogance and discrimination, and would not tolerate the subjection of Indians abroad to any indignity.

The time has come when the theory and practice of racial arrogance and discrimination must be challenged. It is true that at the present moment we are not strong enough as a nation, or as a people, to put an end to racial discrimination and national indignity. But the time is coming soon when we may be strong enough. Whether we are strong enough or not, one thing, however, should be certain — that we prefer any consequences to submission to this evil.

The issue of Indians in South Africa has become a world issue. It is up to the Indians there to realise this fact, and act worthily on the world stage, which they occupy in this matter. They have not only their own dignity and interest to safeguard, but have the honour of India in their keeping. That is not a light obligation. Let no man, woman or child, who claims to be Indian, forget this privilege and obligation at any time. Let him remember that the day is coming when the strong arm and stout heart of India will protect her children, wherever they might be.

South African Indians should not claim anything which might be against the rights and dignity of the African people, as claims should be based on the broader foundation of racial and international equality. We must remember in this matter we do not stand alone. The whole of Asia and Africa will stand with us, and we shall stand with them.

1. Message to a visiting South African Indian delegation. From *The Hindustan Times*, 3 June 1946.

### 31. Food for Indians in Mauritius<sup>1</sup>

Though there may be distress in India we cannot forget our countrymen abroad and any appeal from them to the mother country must always

1. Statement to the press, New Delhi, 17 June 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 18 June 1946.

have a hearing. Our people in Mauritius have especially suffered from the lack of the food they were used to. On their behalf, a request which is modest enough has been made for 2,000 tons of pulses.<sup>2</sup> They have avoided asking for rice and wheat which are so badly needed here. What the situation in India is as regards pulses I do not know. But if it is at all possible I hope this request of theirs will be agreed to and pulses sent to Mauritius.

2. An Indian member of the Mauritius Legislative Council came to India early in 1946 to urge the Government of India for 2000 tons of pulses to help restore a balanced diet for Indians in Mauritius.

### 32. The Death Dealer<sup>1</sup>

I was asked today what my reactions were to the atom bomb experiment.<sup>2</sup> For the moment I did not say anything, but my mind became more and more occupied with this latest "advance" of our civilization and numerous pictures of what might happen came before me.

First of all, it seemed very odd to me that this experiment should take place in the way it did, with all the fanfare of publicity for which America is famous. Normally war offices do not shout about their latest weapons and indeed try their utmost to keep them secret. It is true that probably such an experiment could not have been kept wholly secret. But still there was no obvious necessity for deliberate publicity unless some definite objective was being aimed at.

What could this be? Surely to announce to the world and to all to whom it may concern of this might of the United States of America and their readiness to blow up any people or country who came in the way of their policy. It was a challenge and a threat. It was a reminder of the stark reality behind all the talks of the foreign ministers and the U.N.O. It was the dark shadow of approaching war—World War III.

This is not the way to lay the foundations of peace or to remove the fear in people's minds which leads so often to war. Inevitably that fear would grow and grip nations and peoples and each would try frantically to get this new weapon or some adequate protection from it.

1. Editorial written by Jawaharlal, 1 July 1946. *National Herald*, 2 July 1946

2. The U.S. tested an atomic bomb at Bikini Islands on 1 July 1946. It damaged more ships than were ever before damaged by a single explosion.

Peace seems far distant now, a dream that has faded, and mankind apparently marches ahead to its doom. For though the atom bomb has come to blast the world, no bomb has yet touched the minds of our statesmen and men of authority, who cannot get out of their old ruts, and still want to preserve their old world. We have heard much of the Four Freedoms<sup>3</sup> and of the brave new world to come, and yet the only freedom that the mass of humanity is likely to possess is the freedom to die and to be blown to bits; of course, to preserve democracy and liberty and the Four Freedoms.

Have words lost all their meaning and have men's minds lost all anchorage? For this surely is the way to madness, and the great men who control our destinies are dangerous self-centred lunatics, who are too full of their conceit and pride of power that they will rather rain death and destruction all over the world than give up their petty opinions and think and act aright.

It is an astonishing and shameful thing that people should put up with this madness, especially when the world seemed so near to achieving what it has desired and dreamt of for ages past. Peace and cooperation and wellbeing for all the peoples of the world were well within grasp. But the gods perhaps envied the lot of man and drove him mad.

Whether madness and death are the fate of man in the near future, or some thing better, no one can say. But it is certain that the way of the atom bomb is not the way of peace or freedom. The only useful purpose it can serve is to put an end to the power-mad people in authority, to those who wish to dominate over others, to the race-proud who deny equality to others, to the men of privilege who rest on others' labour and suffering, to those who prosper when others starve and die.

3. In a message to the U.S. Congress on 6 January 1941, Roosevelt had stated that Four Freedoms should prevail throughout the world—freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear. These were substantially incorporated in the Atlantic Charter.

### 33. Message to the People of the Philippines<sup>1</sup>

Freedom and independence are the battle cries of every Asian country and people. Every advance of freedom, therefore, in any country of

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 5 July 1946. From *National Herald*, 6 July 1946.

## The Death-Dealer

I was asked today what my reactions were to the Atom Bomb experiments. For the moment I did not say anything, but my mind became more and more occupied with this latest 'advance' of our civilization and numerous pictures of what might happen came before me.

First of all, it seemed very odd to me that this experiment should take place in the way it did, with all the fanfare of publicity for which America is famous. Normally war offices do not shout about their latest

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wish to dominate over others, to  
the ~~mad~~ ~~power-mad~~ race-proud  
who deny equality to others,  
to the men of privilege who rest on  
others' labour and suffering, to those  
who prosper when others starve  
and die.

Jawaharlal Nehru

July 1. 1946

Asia is welcome. The independence of the Philippines has been inaugurated on an auspicious day;<sup>2</sup> famous in the annals of freedom, when the American colonies started their career of independence which was to lead them to new heights in prosperity and power undreamt of in previous ages.

We send our greetings to the people of the Philippines on this opening of a new chapter in their history. We hope that this really signifies independence, for this word has become rather hackneyed and outworn and has been made to mean many things. Some countries that are called independent are far from free and are under the economic or military domination of some great power. Some so-called independent countries carry on with what might be termed "puppet" regimes and are in a way client countries of some great power. We hope that is not so with the Philippines.

With India in the past, the people of the Philippines, as of all other countries of South East Asia, have had closest contact. Not only history but present interests also demand that. Inevitably, whatever the future of the world organisation is, India and the countries of South East Asia must hang together and work together. This is necessary from the point of view of defence and strategy, for trade and commerce, and in cultural association. So, on this welcome and auspicious occasion—we send our good wishes to the people of the Philippines.

2. On 4 July 1946, the Republic of the Philippines was inaugurated. M. Manuel Roxas was sworn in as President.

### 34. Cable to Manuel Roxas<sup>1</sup>

9.7.46

On behalf of Indian people I send you<sup>2</sup> and people of Philippines greetings and good wishes. May your independence be the forerunner of the true freedom of all countries and peoples of Asia joined together in close comradeship.

Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. M. Manuel Roxas (1892-1948); Speaker, Philippine House of Representatives, 1922-34; member, National Assembly, 1935-38; Secretary of Finance, 1938-40; President of the Philippines, 1946-48.

**35. Indians in Sri Lanka<sup>1</sup>**

There has long been trouble in regard to Indians in Ceylon on so many matters, such as franchise and other conditions of citizenship. The present trouble began with the eviction of some hundreds of Indian labourers from the Knavesmere estate.<sup>2</sup> We have been placed in a difficult position. As far as possible, we do not want to do anything to embitter the relations between Indians and the Sinhalese because we look upon the Sinhalese almost as people of another part of India. They are our stock culturally, racially, linguistically and geographically, and no doubt in future there will be the closest union between India and Ceylon.

Unfortunately, the recent policies of the Ceylon Government have been apparently almost deliberately designed to oust Indians from Ceylon or to make their existence very precarious. I can understand the Ceylon Government saying that only those Indians who choose to be Ceylon nationals should enjoy rights of Ceylon citizenship of full rank. I think Indians there, as Indians in Burma and elsewhere, will have to decide, sometime or other, whether they are nationals of the country they reside in or whether they retain their Indian nationality. These questions have not arisen so far because of the supposed common nationality. It is not very common as you see how the common nationality of the British empire is functioning at present in South Africa. But now these questions are bound to arise and each person will have to decide which nationality he chooses.

Most Indians in Ceylon are not people who have gone there for a short visit. They have lived there for generations as the Ceylonese or as anybody. They might as well decide to be Ceylon nationals, not, of course, cutting themselves away from India culturally. Some Indians in Ceylon might well choose to retain their Indian nationality, and not claim any special rights belonging to Ceylon nationals. Even they shall have rights which every person enjoys so long as it does not offend the laws of that country. This is a fundamental proposition we agreed to.

The next question is that those people, especially Indian workers in Ceylon, should be protected against unfair treatment. Not being given

1. Interview to the press, Bombay, 10 July 1946. From *The Hindu*, 11 July 1946.

2. In April 1946, the Government of Sri Lanka served quit notices on 495 Indian labourers in the Knavesmere estate. As they refused the Government prosecuted them. This led to a strike by 130,000 Indian labourers from 12 June to 9 July 1946.



the franchise, they are voteless and nobody cares for them. Now there is a process of squeezing them out by simply evicting them from the land they have occupied, in some cases for 30 or 40 years as workers.

The scheme<sup>3</sup> of the Ceylon Government for the settlement of these lands is not a bad scheme. It is a good scheme. I do not know the details but, generally speaking, I have no objection to their scheme. But what I feel wrong is that they should exclude Indians living on that island from the operation of that scheme. Secondly, no Government can push out a large number of people from the land or anywhere without making some provision for them elsewhere in the shape of work.

There are, I believe, some 900,000 Indians in Ceylon and naturally a very large number of them belong to the labouring population in the tea and rubber estates. There are many business people too. At the moment, we need not trouble about businessmen's interests, because they can look after their own interests. The question, therefore, is the interests of the Indian labourers in Ceylon. Nearly a month ago, a kind of general hartal was started there. The mere fact that such a big-scale strike was carried on in a peaceful way for such a long time is a remarkable feature and a tribute to the organisation of Indian labour in Ceylon.

We do not want to increase the bitterness between the Indians and the Ceylonese, because ultimately our interests are alike, and we have to pull together. It is quite easy for India to bring enormous pressure on Ceylon apart from these strikes and hartals because, to a considerable extent, the economy of Ceylon must depend on India. Despite the many grievances of Indian nationals in Ceylon against the Ceylon Government's policy, India did send food to help Ceylon to tide over the recent crisis. We did this because we did not want our grievances to be a pretext not to help them. After all, we are very much a big brother to Ceylon — big in size and in economic position — and one does not like to use such pressure as might be normally used elsewhere in such a situation.

When I visited Ceylon six years ago, even then I took up an attitude not of threat and fighting, but rather of trying to settle it by goodwill. But the kind of thing that is happening in Ceylon today irritates one very much. It is a very small-minded policy, which might, for a moment, yield small results to a few, but it leads to grave consequences. I do hope the Ceylon Government will consider the broader aspects of this question and meet us at least half-way. We are prepared to go more than half-way.

3. The Sri Lanka Government acquired the Knavesmere estate under its land settlement and village improvement scheme.

I myself would like to go to Ceylon as soon as possible. Meanwhile, two of the members of the Committee appointed by the Congress Executive, Mr. Aryanayakam and Mr. Ramachandran,<sup>4</sup> would go immediately to Ceylon, more or less to investigate and report. I myself and Mr. Rajagopalachari might follow them later.

I appeal to the Indian press to take up the question of Indians in Ceylon and deal with it not in an aggressive and offensive manner, but rather in a firm, peaceful and friendly manner. The Ceylon press, as a whole, is giving very little publicity to the cause of Indian nationals in Ceylon.

4. G. Ramachandran (b. 1904); imprisoned seven times during freedom struggle; Minister, first Kerala Congress Ministry, 1947; founder-director, Gandhigram Rural University, Madurai; member, Rajya Sabha, 1964-70.

### 36. The Need for Cultural Centres Abroad<sup>1</sup>

As I was reading the Memorandum and Articles of Association of the Indian Association and Institute Ltd., I wondered why some such thing had not been done previously. It is an obvious necessity. I know that some efforts to start cultural and similar centres abroad have been made in the past, but they have been on a small scale and have not gone far. It seems to me essential that social and cultural centres as well as student centres should be established for Indians in foreign countries where our people live or go for studies. Some such thing is particularly necessary in the United Kingdom where such large numbers of Indians still reside or study. Something had been done in the past for students by official agencies, but this has been entirely unsatisfactory as it was bound to be so long as the official agency was divorced from the living currents of Indian life. A free India would naturally remedy this defect. Nevertheless it is desirable for private efforts to be made in this connection.

I welcome, therefore, the formation of the Indian Association and Institute in England. It aims at an ambitious programme of activity. Even if it succeeds in part it would have done a good and worthwhile job from the point of view of Indians abroad as well as from the point of view of others who want to know something about India. The sub-

1. Message given at Allahabad on 12 July 1946 on the formation of the Indian Association and Institute in England. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

scribers and promoters of this Association are well-known Indian residents of England and I have faith in their capacity to make this scheme a success. The burden will partly fall on Indians in London, but obviously if this job is to be done it must be done well and in a manner worthy of India. Therefore it is necessary that people in India should help also. I hope this help will be forthcoming.

At present Indians going abroad to any country have no national centre there. The nationals of almost all other countries have such centres wherever they go. It is time that Indians also have social and cultural centres in the big cities of the world. London must have them, so also Paris, Washington, Moscow, Prague, Cairo and 'Nanking. This scheme deals more or less with England alone. Let us make a beginning there, and then we can start in other places also. It is obvious that any such scheme has enormous possibilities of development. It should be welcomed not only by Indians but by Britishers, for it will mean providing healthy contacts between the two. In the past relations between the two had been unhealthy because England's relation with India was unhealthy. A free India will function differently. It will be busy with vast schemes of internal developments. At the same time it is bound to take an important part in international affairs. It is desirable that opportunities should be provided for healthy contacts to develop between Indians and others so that a measure of mutual understanding follows.

I wish the scheme every success. I shall watch its unfolding and development with great interest.

N.B. Shri V.K. Krishna Menon has conveyed to me a resolution of this Association and Institute inviting me to be acting honorary president. Normally I hesitate to accept even honorary offices but in the present instance I gladly agree as I am desirous of giving such help as I can.

### 37. To E.W. Aryanayakam<sup>1</sup>

Lucknow  
14 July 1946

My dear Aryanayakam,

Your telegram has just been telephoned to me from Allahabad. I am glad you are going to Ceylon soon. I hope you are taking Ramachandran with you. I suggested in a letter to you from Bombay that you

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

might break journey in Madras and see Rajagopalachari who is also a member of our Ceylon Committee.

I look upon your preliminary visit to Ceylon more as exploratory than as an attempt to settle anything finally. I should like you to meet the ministers, especially Senanayake, the Ceylon Indian Congress people and the Indian estate labourers. These last named must have suffered during the strike and will require soothing.

It is difficult to lay down any hard and fast line of approach. We are especially interested in the fate of large numbers of Indian labourers in the tea and rubber estates. The Indian merchants are well capable of looking after themselves though of course we should help them in every reasonable demand. I am entirely against our merchant classes there claiming any special privileges, such as the British claim in India. They have done that in the past and I am quite clear in my mind that they must not do so. Apart from this they must have fair treatment and an open field.

I agree with what Senanayake has said that Indians in Ceylon cannot have at the same time the privileges of both Ceylon and Indian nationalities. They have to choose and undertake the corresponding obligations. It is easy for merchant classes to make a choice and probably most of them would like to continue to remain Indian nationals.

With labour this position becomes difficult and in practice it has been made terribly difficult. The only right course is to fix a time limit and accept all those who have been there a certain number of years as Ceylon nationals, unless they choose to opt out. Even if a positive affirmation is necessary to become a Ceylon national this should be made quite easy so that the labour union or the Ceylon National Congress might thus get the proper forms filled in and forwarded to the proper authority. I understand that the procedure thus far has been one of vigorous cross-examination which confuses the poor labourer and usually his application is rejected.<sup>2</sup>

About the new scheme of village settlement, Indians should be allowed full chance to take advantage of it if they want to. Secondly in any event nobody should be dispossessed or ejected without some other provision being made for him or her. This would apply to the Indians ejected from the Knavesmere estate.

2. The new constitution of Sri Lanka left the question of franchise and citizenship for Indians at the mercy of the majority community of Sinhalese. Non-Indian foreigners could secure citizenship and franchise after six months of residence. But an Indian had to go through a humiliating procedure.

These are just odd suggestions. You should discuss the matter fully with the Ceylon Indian Congress people and get to know their view on it. We do not want any special privileges which go against the welfare of Ceylon or the people of Ceylon. But we want fair treatment for our people and full opportunity to them to become Ceylon nationals in law as in fact many of them have been. Also we want Indian nationals residing in Ceylon to have as honourable a place as that given to any other outsiders. There is no reason why an Englishman, who is obviously not a Ceylon national, should be favoured at the expense of an Indian.

Finally we want friendly relations between India and Ceylon because we are convinced that our future is linked together. Our approach is therefore entirely different from what it might be to aliens and foreigners. If the Ceylon Government reciprocated in this way I have no doubt that we can easily come to a settlement.

It is my desire to visit Ceylon though I cannot say just when this will be. After your return I hope to meet you and discuss the matter with you and then fix a date for my own visit. Meanwhile, I hope that everyone concerned in Ceylon will avoid doing anything which worsens the situation.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 38. The Struggle of Indians in Natal<sup>1</sup>

We are watching with anxious interest and deep admiration our countrymen's heroic struggle in South Africa.<sup>2</sup> We shall be with you to the end. *Jai Hind.*

1. Allahabad, 18 July 1946. Reply to a cable of the secretary of the Natal Indian Congress telling of the struggle in South Africa. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 July 1946.
2. In protest against the segregation law Indians in Durban started a satyagraha in June 1946 by establishing tented camps in the European residential zone. On 24 June 1946, 99 passive resisters were arrested.

### **39. Request for Financial Support for Inter-Asian Relations Conference<sup>1</sup>**

Dear . . . ,

The executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs has endorsed my suggestion of an inter-Asian relations conference, to be held early next year at Delhi or some other suitable place in India. The proposal has already had an encouraging response from prominent leaders in Syria, Indonesia, Burma and Ceylon.

The main object of the Conference will be to exchange ideas regarding the common problems which all Asian countries must face in the post-war era. The final agenda cannot be prepared in detail without previous consultation with the participating countries. Tentatively, however, the following topics have been approved by the executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs: (a) national movements for freedom in Asia; (b) racial problems, with special reference to the root-causes of racial conflicts; (c) transition from a colonial to national economy, dictated primarily by national interests, but with due regard to international cooperation; (d) inter-Asian emigration and the status and treatment of immigrants; (e) welfare problems, with special reference to public health and nutrition; (f) problems of industrial labour and industrial development; (g) cultural problems, with special reference to education, art and architecture, scientific research and literature; (h) the status of women and women's movements in Asia.

Each participating country will be invited to send a certain number of delegates and observers, to be selected by organisations having objects similar to those of the Indian Council of World Affairs. Invitations will shortly go out to representative leaders in the different countries of Asia, so that we may have at the conference a full and satisfactory discussion of the problems on the agenda. It is hoped that one result of the conference may be the periodical summoning of similar gatherings at suitable intervals at different centres in Asia.

India, as the host, will have to arrange for the accommodation of the delegates who will attend the conference. Adequate preparations must be made for the reception of the delegates from other countries and facilities afforded to them (to the extent that funds permit) to see something of India during their stay in the country. An approximate estimate of the expenses of the conference is two lakh rupees.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L. Jawaharlal wrote this letter from Delhi on 30 July 1946 to many prominent people.

I have accepted the invitation of the executive committee of the Indian Council of World Affairs to be chairman of the committee entrusted with the task of organising the conference. I would be grateful for a generous contribution from you to meet the expenses of the conference. Cheques may be drawn in my favour and sent to me at the above address.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 40. Cable to Maharaj Singh<sup>1</sup>

Greetings to *Searchlight*.<sup>2</sup> May it prove brave fighter in cause which is so gallantly represented today by our fellow countrymen in South Africa. Their passive resistance struggle is not for Indians only but against all racial dominance and inequality and for human dignity and progress. They will ultimately win as India will win her freedom because there is no other way to end world conflicts.

1. 1 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1946-47, p. 718, N.M.M.L.

2. *The Searchlight Weekly* was started to support the cause of Indians in South Africa.

#### 41. Aerial Battles over Java<sup>1</sup>

The newspapers tell us of aerial battles over Java, where the Dutch are trying to smother and crush the Indonesian Republic. It is stated that

1. Statement to the press, Wardha, 10 August 1946. From *The Hindustan Times*, 11 August 1946.

some Allied fighter planes have also cooperated with the Dutch. It is well for us to remember that, while we are inevitably concerned with our own struggle for independence, our brothers and sisters in Indonesia are fighting to retain their independence and to protect their new-born Republic. The 17th of August is the Independence Day of Indonesia and I am sure that on that day large numbers of people in India would like to send their greetings and good wishes to the people of Indonesia and to express their solidarity in the cause of Asian freedom. I hope to join the celebrations in Bombay on that day. The unity of Asian freedom from the east, south-east and west of this great continent becomes ever more evident. In order to ensure this unity and to develop closer relations between the different countries of Asia it has been proposed to hold a conference of representatives from Asian countries in January or February next. Meanwhile, our thoughts go to Java and all other places in Asia where the struggle for freedom is going on today.

## 42. Restrictions on Immigration to East Africa<sup>1</sup>

The Working Committee having heard Mr. R.B. Pandya on behalf of the East African Indian National Congress and Mr. Harichand M. Shah on behalf of the Africa and Overseas Merchants Chamber, on the attempts made by the Governments of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika to introduce anti-Indian immigration legislation, express their deep concern over the situation developing in these territories.<sup>2</sup>

In view of the assurances given by the East African Governments to the Government of India that defence regulations restricting immigration were a temporary measure to meet certain wartime needs, the Working Committee take a very grave view of the refusal of these Governments

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed by the Congress Working Committee, Wardha, 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. 25/1946 p. 181, N.M.M.L.
- 2 The bill aimed at making permanent the immigration restrictions imposed under cover of shortage of food and housing as a temporary war measure. The bill also stated that an immigration permit might be refused if it was sought for employment which a suitably qualified resident could take up. Permits required capital sums from the immigrants seeking to start business on their own account.



to withdraw these regulations as promised, and ask the Government of India to take appropriate measures to secure without delay the fulfilment of these promises by the Governments concerned.

The Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the introduction of the immigration restriction bill in the present state of the political, economic and social development of the East African territories and their inhabitants, and is emphatically of opinion that the British Colonial Office should restore pre-war conditions as regards immigration by withdrawing wartime regulations and should prevent the anti-Indian policy of the European inhabitants from being given sanction and legislative shape.

Indians were in East Africa long before any British set foot on that soil and they could point to as many generations of useful industry on the coast as well as inland as the white settlers could count years of residence. In consideration of this history of colonisation and opening up of East African territories, Mr. Winston Churchill came to the conclusion and wrote in his book many years ago that no government with a scrap of respect for honest dealing between man and man could introduce a policy of keeping Indians out of East Africa.

The Committee are also of opinion that any step to bring about the economic union of the three East African territories should include the provision for equal representation as proposed by the British Colonial Office and should not yield to the pressure of the European population to abandon this provision.

The Committee reiterate the protest against the reservation of the best part of the land, the Highlands, for white men, by excluding even the Africans to whom the soil of their own country must belong.

The Committee wish all success to the delegation<sup>2</sup> going to East Africa under the leadership of Rajah Sir Maharaj Singh to study the situation on the advisability of dropping their proposed anti-Indian immigration legislation which is now being precipitated, in view of developments in India, and hope that they will be able to convince the East African Governments that any anti-Indian policy encouraged in East Africa will be an intolerable addition to the insults and provocations which are aimed at India and which undoubtedly serve to postpone the day of realisation of true world peace and security.

The Working Committee have noted with pleasure that cordial relations prevail between the Africans and Indians, and trust that there will

3. The Government of India had deputed Maharaj Singh, K. Sarwar Hasan and C.S. Jha to East Africa to examine the extent to which Indian interests would be affected by the proposed Immigration Restriction Bill.

be continued cooperation between the two for their mutual advancement, and for the removal of the disabilities which are sought to be imposed upon both of them by the white settlers.

#### 43. Goodwill to East Africa<sup>1</sup>

My good wishes to our countrymen and countrywomen in East Africa and through them to the Africans. The Congress Working Committee have already expressed their opinion on the position of Indians in East Africa and the attempts being made to prevent further immigration of Indians there and otherwise to discriminate against our people.<sup>2</sup>

Nowhere in the world can we accept a lower status for our people than the status of others. Nowhere will we approve of racialism or the suppression of one people or race by another. Indians abroad must always remember that they have the honour of India in their keeping. That is a great privilege and responsibility. That honour involves fair and friendly dealings with the people of the country they go to. It involves also non-submission to wrong and injustice. *Jai Hind*.

1. Message to East African Indians, Bombay, 14 August 1946. *The Hindu*, 16 August 1946.
2. See preceding item.

#### 44. To C.W.W. Kannangara<sup>1</sup>

3 August 1946  
Allahabad

Dear Dr. Kannangara,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 24th July. I have been wanting to visit Ceylon for some time past, but I am not yet sure if or when I shall go there. That depends partly on my work here and partly on my coming to the conclusion that my visit will be useful to all concerned. Certain comments in the Ceylon press would seem to indicate that my proposed

1. J.N. Collection.
2. At this time Minister of Education in the Sri Lanka Government.

visit was not welcomed by some members of the Ceylon Government. Naturally I do not wish to thrust myself where I am not wanted. My purpose in going to Ceylon was a friendly one of meeting Ceylonese leaders as well as Indians and trying to help in solving such problems as had arisen and putting an end to any friction that might exist. It was indeed with this viewpoint that our Congress Working Committee passed a resolution advising the Ceylon Indian Congress to withdraw the strike of estate labourers. We are eager and anxious to develop close and friendly relations with the people of Ceylon because we are convinced that we have to pull together in the future. We do not look upon Ceylon as a foreign country and, therefore, it pains us when some of our friends there do not reciprocate fully.

I would be happy to attend a meeting of the All-Ceylon Literary Association, but as the date of my visit is entirely uncertain it would not be desirable for the Association to upset their programme because of me. In case I am in Ceylon at the time, I shall deem it a privilege to address the Literary Association. As you must be aware, however, the situation in India is such that it is not easy for me to go abroad or to make any long-distance programme.

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

#### 45. To C.E. Jayewardene<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

Dear Mr. Jayewardene,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 20th July. My visit to Ceylon is still a doubtful and far away affair. It is difficult for me to fix any engagements from here. But certainly I shall bear your kind invitation in mind. If I go to Ceylon it will be on a short visit and I shall be busy with my main object.

1. J.N. Collection.

2. Brother of J.R. Jayewardene and a leader of the Ceylon National Congress.

3. In which Jayewardene invited Jawaharlal to be his guest during his proposed visit to Sri Lanka.

We are all desirous here of developing closer relations with Ceylon. It is with this object that I would go there. I regret greatly that petty-minded people on both sides should come in the way of those closer relations.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 46. To E. Celler<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
4 August 1946

My dear Mr. Celler,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of July 8th for the good wishes it contains. We were all pleased to learn of the passage of your bill to permit Indian immigration and naturalisation in the United States.<sup>3</sup> This does not make much difference so far as numbers are concerned, but undoubtedly it is a right gesture which should help in promoting better relations between India and the United States.

We in India know well of the interest you have taken in the cause of India's freedom. We have appreciated your efforts in this direction. India will undoubtedly be independent in the near future in spite of our present difficulties. What part she will play as an independent country, both domestically and internationally, is more difficult to say. Whatever that part may be, it will be an important one for she is too big a country to remain in the second rank. I hope that in this future India will have close relations with the United States to the mutual advantage of both countries.

With all good wishes to you,

Sincerely yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. (1888-1966); as member of the U.S. House of Representatives Celler advocated liberalisation of the immigration and naturalisation laws and generally supported the cause of India.
3. The Indian Naturalisation Bill, passed by the U.S. Senate on 2 July 1946, provided for the naturalisation of 4000 Indians already living in the U.S., and an annual immigration of 100 Indians.

**47. To Roger Baldwin<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
6 August 1946

My dear Roger,

I received your letter<sup>2</sup> of April 14th a long time ago. I was happy to hear from you again not only because you are an old friend but also because of your irrepressible faith in the future of internationalism on a democratic basis. I wish I could share that optimism though certainly I do not despair, but the world is in a pretty bad way and there seems to be no end to human folly.

Looking at it from another point of view, it is exciting to be alive and to take part in what you say is the most significant struggle of our times.

Ever yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.
2. Roger Baldwin wrote on 14 April 1946: "You are one of the architects of the new world far beyond the framers of the United Nations. . . . I am, as ever, hopeful for the future of internationalism on a democratic basis."

**48. Foundations of World Peace<sup>1</sup>**

Through my young friend, Ram Krishna Bajaj,<sup>2</sup> and other delegates who are going to the World Students Congress from India, I send my greetings and good wishes to the Congress which is meeting in the historic city of Prague. The world is in a bad way and though the world war is over we live still in the tension of conflict and possible future wars. It is for the youth of the world to rescue humanity from this tragic round and to build anew on surer foundations. Those foundations must mean

1. Wardha, 9 August 1946. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. This message was sent to the World Students Congress held at Prague on 18-31 August 1946.
2. (b. 1923); younger son of Jamnalal Bajaj; imprisoned for participation in freedom struggle, 1941 and 1942-45; now an industrialist.

the elimination of fascism and imperialism and colonialism and racialism and the domination of one country or people or class over another. Only then will the true foundations of peace and progress be laid and the fear of war removed and the various peoples of the world cooperate together to build a new order of freedom for man. For freedom is indivisible, just as peace is today indivisible.

To this great task I hope the Students Congress will devote itself.

#### 49. Telegram to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Congress Working Committee is deeply perturbed at news of despatch Indian troops to Iran.<sup>2</sup> For many years Congress has expressed strong objection to use Indian troops overseas without consent Indian people. This action appears more serious in altered circumstances of today. Committee has asked me refer matter to you for elucidation before further consideration. Would be grateful to have your reply here.<sup>3</sup>

1. Sent from Wardha, 10 August 1946. J.N. Collection.
2. On 3 August 1946, the Government of India announced that Indian troops had been sent to Basra in order that they might be at hand for the protection, should circumstances demand it, of Indians, British and Arabs and to safeguard Indian and British interests in south Iran.
3. Wavell replied that the troops had been sent to Iraq where they were welcomed, and not to Iran, that there were vital Indian interests in regard to oil supply, and that many Indian lives were threatened.

#### 50. Inter-Asian Relations<sup>1</sup>

I remember when I was in Europe just twenty years ago, I attended a conference in Brussels, at which many Asian and European countries

1. Address to a meeting convened by the Bombay branch of the Indian Council of World Affairs, 22 August 1946. *India Quarterly*, (New Delhi), Vol. 11, 1946, pp. 323-326.

were represented. Then those who came from Asia met together, and we talked about developing some kind of contacts so that we could meet occasionally, somewhere in Asia, and develop political, economic and other relations, and, at any rate, get to know each other better. But though everybody agreed, and there were plenty of people from China, Indo-China, Indonesia, Ceylon, India, some from Syria, and I think one or two from Iran, an odd fact emerged: that this conference or meeting that we might have, of representatives from Asia, could not meet anywhere in Asia! It was easier to meet in Paris, Berlin, or Brussels, or London, than anywhere in Asia, partly because of political restrictions and partly because of travel difficulties which made it easier to reach European countries than any part of Asia. So the project dropped, and contacts dropped, except in so far as, for the following years, I remained in touch with many of these people from Syria to Indo-China. We used to correspond sometimes and it might interest you to know that some of the friends I made twenty years ago at the conference are running the Indonesian Republic today; and those old contacts have stood us well because, apart from knowing each other distantly, personal relationships made me personally more interested in Indonesia and to a small extent made them more interested in India. And if you have read any of the statements made by the Indonesian leaders you will find an amazing knowledge in them of Indian affairs, Indian political developments—even in some detail. As you know also, recently—some months back—they offered to send a great deal of rice here. That too, I think, was partly due to certain personal contacts that began nearly twenty years ago.

It is extraordinary really, when you come to think of it, that no one has previously sponsored a new organisation or group of individuals, such as an Asiatic—forgive me, I dislike using that word—Asian conference because it is so obviously a thing that should be done. Especially now, that is, since the last war, closer relations between Asian countries have become so absolutely essential that, whether you sponsor this conference or not, it is bound to come and as it is bound to come we may as well take a lead in it because, whichever way you look at it, India happens to be the centre of all this. Nowadays, one hears a great deal about regions. Well, whether one talks of the Middle East, or Middle West, or South East Asia, or China, they all impinge on India; all depend on India, economically, politically and for defence purposes. They cannot help looking at India and we cannot help looking at them. There has been a great deal of talk about southern Asia and south eastern Asia regions, in which of course India is included. Other people have talked about an Indian Ocean region and again India is included. India is also

the centre viewed in terms of the defence of the countries of western Asia. It is obvious that India has to be some kind of a base for defence. The other day I saw something about some kind of military memorandum, and it was said there, that if anything took place in the Middle East obviously defence must be organised from India. In any defence organisation from India, obviously the second base must be South India. So even South India comes into it. Nowadays you must think of these things in terms of 'depth' as they call it. So it seems that in the modern world it is inevitable for India to be the centre of things in Asia. (In that term, I would include Australia and New Zealand too, being in the Indian Ocean region. East Africa comes into it also.) If so, it is about time that we in India began to think of this conference not vaguely but concretely and to think of it in cooperation with the representatives of all these other countries. I wish many of our people could visit these countries more than they do, not merely as tourists, but in many other ways. I should like to have political contacts with those countries but so long as political contacts are not available, cultural contacts, economic contacts and other contacts can grow. This conference that is proposed might well begin this kind of development. A conference at an expert level, under the auspices of an unofficial and non-political body like the Indian Council of World Affairs, to review the position of Asia in the post-war world, exchange ideas on the problems which are common to all Asian countries and study the ways and means of promoting closer contacts between them will, I am sure, lead to fruitful results.

I was asked who was to send representatives. I have not the least notion, because that really depends on the type of organisations they have there and without knowledge of that how am I to reply to that question? I would suggest that your definition should be vague and not exclusive, so that you can adjust yourself to any type of organisation—provided it is not undesirable—that you find in those countries. It may be even that Governments might be unofficially represented. If some countries have no organisations of this type and want to send observers, they should be welcome. A type of organisation like the Pacific Relations Institute—something like that—should be peculiarly suitable. Probably in each country they have their own type of organisation and I think they should be permitted to send delegates. First try to find out what organisations there are and then pick and choose between them, without being too exclusive about it. When you have more than one organisation to choose from they may be asked to send a joint and agreed delegation. What is important is that we must have from each country the best men that it can send, men who are well conversant with the problems set for discussion, the needs of their countries



and their relations with those of the rest of Asia. In the choice of delegates, the need to represent different points of view at the conference will, I am sure, be borne in mind. Thus you may have delegates from Palestine to present both the Jewish and the Arab points of view. The delegates from China may put forward the points of view of both the Kuomintang and the Communists. At the same time care must be taken to avoid trespassing upon the domestic problems of particular states. The conference is an inter-Asian relations conference and every care must be taken to see that the subjects selected for discussion and the approach to them are strictly inter-Asian in character. We avoid, on the one hand, controversial issues relating to particular Asian states and, on the other, issues which have more than an Asian incidence and can be solved only at higher levels.

I remember, when this subject was being discussed at first, some people thought the conference might be confined to south eastern Asia. I don't see why only south eastern Asia should be invited although it does form a region somewhat, from the defence and economic points of view, more closely allied to India. Then some people were afraid that if we spread out too much we might get nowhere, but I think we should spread out. I do not suppose that at this conference any revolutionary changes would be made, or anything would happen politically that would create a marked change in any country. I do think, however, that the mere act of holding this conference is psychologically revolutionary, that is to say, in making the people of Asia think in terms of closer cooperation with each other.

You know that in China one of the marked effects of the last war, of the Japanese invasion, was to push their southern regions nearer to India and this led them to think more of India. The Burma Road development was a result of this. And their previous outlook, which was confined to the Treaty Ports,<sup>2</sup> was upset and reversed and they had to think of the mainland more than of the hinterland. To some extent this had also happened more in recent years as a result of air traffic.

I wonder if you have realised that one of the major effects of the British occupation of India was the isolation of India from the rest of Asia. Until the British came here India had many close contacts with her neighbouring countries, but the result of British rule, partly deliberately, and partly as a result of the development of sea routes, cut us off completely from these countries and our contacts with each other were broken

2. The five Chinese ports—Canton, Amoy, Foochow, Ningbo and Shanghai—that were opened to British consuls and merchants in 1842 at the end of the First Opium War.

except by way of sea routes controlled by Europe, more especially by England.

In the last twenty or thirty years great changes have been taking place for various reasons, but more especially because of the development of airlines, and again, inevitably, India is getting into contact more and more with those countries.

I referred earlier to the Middle East, the Middle West, to China and South East Asia. Then there is a huge chunk of a country to the north of us, that is, Soviet Russia including Siberia and Turkestan. Obviously it is desirable for India to have relations with it—close relations—and I should imagine that, as soon as India can do so, one of the first things we should do is to establish proper diplomatic relations with all these Asian countries, including all the Asian Republics of the Soviet Union—which are very important for us from the political point of view. As to where and how these Republics of the Soviet Union would participate and what place they would occupy in the conference, I am not clear in my own mind, because as far as I know that would depend entirely on the governments there and I do not know whether they have any private organisations of this type. It might be possible for some observers to come here from these regions. I should personally like to have them here because it would be to our mutual interest to get to know each other.

Talking of subjects for discussion, these include (a) national movements for freedom in Asia; (b) racial problems with special reference to the rootcauses of racial conflicts; (c) transition from a colonial to a national economy, dictated primarily by national interests, but with due regard to international cooperation; (d) inter-Asian emigration and the status and treatment of immigrants; (e) welfare problems with special reference to public health and nutrition; (f) problems of industrial labour and industrial development; (g) cultural problems with special reference to education, art and architecture, scientific research and literature; and (h) the status of women and women's movements in Asia. Every one of these problems raises issues of the first magnitude for the future of Asia. It is possible that you may call them non-political subjects; but they all impinge on politics, with a background of economics, if you like racial problems, which are terribly important and are likely to become more important in future; in fact these problems all impinge on politics. The conference will not be meeting politically in the sense to become more important in future; in fact these problems all impinge cannot ignore the political aspect, and I should imagine that there should be perfect freedom of discussion about these matters. If you want to

include politics you may do so. They will not be ruled out. All these things you have to deal with in a rather flexible manner, particularly as you have no precedent of any kind to guide you and you have to make rules while you are functioning. Probably there will be difficulties, conflicts, etc., but you should try to avoid conflicts on major issues of the day as far as possible. One of the major issues of the day is a certain conflict between the great powers and we are seeing daily reports of specimens of what is called 'open diplomacy' even in the Peace Conference that is being held. That conflict between the great powers really colours all politics of the world today and it may colour them even more in the future. Almost every country gradually has to take sides—not sides in the material sense but sides in the political sense—especially those countries which are involved in the happenings in Iran. What is happening in Iran today is a very serious problem. I do not know all the facts, but it is obvious that what is happening in Iran might lead to very big trouble. On the one hand, the British have sent troops there openly to protect their oil interest; on the other, Russia says that she will send Russian forces down from the north. Well, between the two, I don't quite know what happens to Iran. I think anyway that it would be better that we should not go too deeply into the political problems of the day. But apart from that, politics are bound to come in and you will have to face them. I do not see how you can ignore them. More especially, developments in Iran make one realise that the world is moving very fast. In what direction we are moving I don't know, but it is certainly not a pleasant direction and we are certainly not in a static condition. Anyway, we have to proceed as if nothing untoward will happen on a big scale. We have no doubt that, if we do meet, the conference will not put an end to the world's troubles. The conference will help to promote good relations with neighbouring countries. It will help to pool ideas and experience with a view to raising living standards. It will strengthen cultural, social and economic ties among the peoples of Asia. The data papers presented to the conference will constitute valuable documents and the discussions on them will, we hope, throw out concrete suggestions for practical policy.

I do not see why we in India or a group of Asian nations should be pushed this way or that way. Why shouldn't we stand on our own feet and not be just playthings of great powers? Naturally, we all have our sympathies but if we meet together and confer together, we may develop a sense of solidarity and strength which may help us to develop some kind of a real inter-Asian policy (I hope against nobody, against neither Europe, America nor Russia, nor any other power) primarily to preserve and develop ourselves and to help world peace so far as we can.

Just one word more. Apart from our immediate problems, people have some kind of distant view of the shape of things to come. Many persons think that, in the course of the next generation or so, a world federation will be established. Ultimately, I suppose it is bound to come if the world survives till then. But short of that it is inevitable that larger and larger federations will develop. I do not know when that will be. It may be in Asia; it may be in Europe. There may be two or three federations. In Asia it seems inevitable that two or three huge federations will develop. But whichever way you look at it, whether it is a kind of federation between South East Asia and India (and these countries are taken together, may be for economic and other reasons) or may be a big federation of West Asia up to India or including India, or East Asia and India leaving out China, and (it is quite conceivable that these federations might develop) India immediately becomes the centre again of everything. India is going to be the centre of a very big federation and, if you think in those terms, problems of today in India immediately take another shape. Take, for instance, the so-called communal problem in India today. It becomes completely different if you think of it in terms of a large federation consisting of India and other countries which are on the borders of India, to the right and to the left. And so, from the point of view of all these possible developments of the future, and not too distant future, it is very desirable for us to gain contacts and develop closer relations with countries all over Asia.

## 51. To Johanan Kaufmann<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

Dear Comrade,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 9th July. I am glad that you like my book *Glimpses of World History*.

I have been following events in Palestine with great attention and interest. I have every sympathy for the Jews but I feel that the only way for them to find a solution of the Palestine problem is through cooperation with the Arabs. Any attempt to coerce them is not going to succeed and will only lead to bitter memories.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A lawyer in Tel Aviv.

**52. To W. Rahula<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

My dear Bhikkhu Rahula,

You will forgive me, I hope, for the delay in answering your letters<sup>2</sup> of the 28th July. I read these with great interest and Aryanayakam also told me much about the movement in which you are taking such an important part. We have given much thought to Ceylon and the future relations of Ceylon and India. I have no doubt in my mind that there is no other way except a federation of India, Ceylon and other countries of South East Asia. But obviously this can only be a matter to be decided by free will of those concerned. I realise that India being so big and potentially strong must rather frighten some people in Ceylon. Yet I do not think there is any reason to fear.

In the context of the world today a country like Ceylon cannot be isolated. It may perhaps hang on to England for a while but that too cannot last long. So the only way out is for a free and equal partnership with India. If that is so, then any step taken to keep the peoples of Ceylon and India estranged from one another is a wrong step and opposed to the natural course of historical development.

I want to visit Ceylon very much as early as possible but I fear this may not be easy in the near future. When I come there I shall certainly meet you and your colleagues.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. He invited Jawaharlal to Sri Lanka to preside over a function of the Vidyalandara Praveena, a Buddhist university.

**53 To Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
28 August 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

International Labour Organisation Conference: Thank you for your letter of 24th August about the International Labour Organisation Con-

1. J.N. Collection.

ference which begins in Montreal on the 19th September. As the delegates have to leave soon for some preliminary conferences, it is difficult to make any changes at this stage either in the delegates or in the advisers. But, as you have suggested, the new government may consider this matter and decide to send other delegates.

**Peace Conference:** Regarding the Peace Conference which is being held in Paris, it is difficult to know exactly what the position is and how matters will shape themselves. India is naturally interested not only in the problems of some of the African territories but in the wider and more vital problem of ensuring peace and security. An Indian delegate will have to express India's viewpoint on this more basic problem also. For the present, however, we feel that no steps need be taken regarding the choice of fresh delegates. The interim government can consider the situation then existing and decide this matter.

**U.N.O. General Assembly:** You told me that some provisional arrangements have been made for the representation of India at the forthcoming meeting of the U.N.O. General Assembly in America at which the South African Indian question is likely to come up for consideration. You suggested some names too which included Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Sir Girja Shankar Bajpai<sup>2</sup> and Mr. Deshmukh,<sup>3</sup> till lately the Agent General in South Africa. You, however, said that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar might be induced to go more specially for a meeting of the section over which he has been presiding.

In view of the past work that Sir Ramaswami Mudaliar has done as president of this section and the desire of the British Foreign Secretary to have him to continue this work, we are agreeable to his doing so.

Mrs. Sarojini Naidu is unfortunately not well enough to undertake this journey. We suggest that the following three delegates might be appointed for this meeting if the U.N.O. General Assembly: Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit, Pandit Hriday Nath Kunzru, and Syed Raza Ali<sup>4</sup> who was Agent General for India in South Africa some years ago. We have been unable to approach these three and get their consent for lack of time, but we think they would make a good team, more specially for

2. (1891-1954); joined the I.C.S. in 1914; India's Agent-General to the U.S., 1941-47; Secretary-General, Ministry of External Affairs, 1947-52; Governor of Bombay, 1952-54.
3. R.M. Deshmukh (b. 1892-1981); High Commissioner for India in South Africa, 1945-47; Prime Minister and Adviser to the Rajpramukh of Vindhya Pradesh, 1947-48; member, Rajya Sabha, 1952-53.
4. (1882-1949); took part in Swaraj and Khilafat movements but then left the Congress; member, Council of States, 1921-26; member, Public Service Commission, 1926-31; Agent-General for India in South Africa, 1935-38.

the South African issue. We suggest that Mrs. Pandit might be the leader of the delegation. It is possible that she may not be able to remain out of India for a lengthy period, but she could go for two or three weeks.

If you so desire one or two other names can be added from your list to these three.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 54. Objectives of India's Foreign Policy<sup>1</sup>

Jawaharlal Nehru: India's new popular government will take a lively interest in international affairs, pursuing an independent policy compatible with her own national interests.

Question: Would not the new government, which takes office on Monday, become so engrossed in internal changes along nationalist lines that foreign affairs will be left in the background?

JN: It is impossible for me at this time to blueprint in detail India's foreign policy. I re-affirm, however, my interpretation of India's future foreign policy as I stated it in March.<sup>2</sup> I said that India would be attracted more to those countries which favoured her own independence and progress. Her general policy is sure to be one of promoting world peace, preventing aggression and helping, insofar as possible, in the attainment of freedom by subject countries of Asia and Africa. We want to be friendly with the three principal powers, but only on the basis of complete freedom. Generally speaking, India would not like to entangle herself with other people's feuds and imperialist rivalries.

Our desire is that India pull her full weight in world affairs. Her influence will be for peace and freedom and there is no doubt that despite internal preoccupations and changes, we will take a lively interest in foreign affairs — partly because we want to do so, and partly because no country can ignore them today.

Q: How can India promote world peace and yet avoid entanglement?

JN: With other people's feuds, I mean the latter phrase specifically in relation to India's role as a subject nation involved in British policies.

It doesn't mean a policy of isolating India. It means we are not allow-

1. Interview given to George E. Jones in Delhi on 30 August 1946 and published in *The New York Times*, 2 September 1946.

2. See *ante*, pp. 524-525.

ing ourselves to be exploited in international affairs.

Q: Do you think that the political turmoil of recent years will exercise an emotional effect on the association of Britain and India in foreign and Commonwealth affairs?

JN: It is inevitable that until India achieves complete freedom, there is bound to be latent friction, and the emotional aspect will be evident. Much will depend on how far the United Kingdom refrains from interfering in Indian affairs and leaves us free to act as we wish.

The new government will consider its association with British and Commonwealth policies on a basis of cooperation for our mutual advantage. This refers to a question which brought up such empire agreements as the dollar pool.<sup>3</sup>

There is presently no question of a pan-Asiatic federation, but it is India's desire to develop close cultural and economic relations with her neighbour countries. Of course we cannot interfere in internal developments of other countries. We would welcome China's unification on a democratic basis.

So far as we are concerned, we are entirely in favour of recognition of the Indonesian republic.

Q: Would you comment on future relations between India and the United States?

JN: I foresee development of economic and cultural intercourse with the U.S. to meet India's own needs in raising her standards of living. This development had been hampered in the past by intervention of British authority, which prevented direct contacts between India and other peoples.

Our aim is to develop India, industrially, educationally and otherwise, at a rapid pace. Our object is to raise the standard of living of the masses. For this purpose we shall have to train vast numbers of people.

We would like to send a number to the United States. From a cultural point of view, we would like to exchange students and professors. In the past, our foreign relations have been largely governed by British policy. They have not only been strictly limited but also unreal. They did not represent the relationship of people looking toward each other. A free democratic government in India would naturally expand these relations.

Q: Will your duties in the new government take you abroad, with particular reference to the United States?

JN: It is possible that my work may take me abroad, but for some time it will be difficult to leave India.

3. India accumulated during the war a credit balance in the United States. This dollar pool was liquidated under the Anglo-American loan agreement of 6 December 1945.



**MISCELLANEOUS**



# The Discovery of India

## 1. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 28, 1946

My dear Nilima,

I received four copies of *The Discovery of India* today. I am afraid most of my friends have come out with criticism of its make-up and appearance. I do not know whether any material change can be made in the next impression. Certainly in the new edition that you will print there must be a number of important changes. About that I shall write to you when the time comes. Meanwhile, if it is possible to have some changes in the next impression of the second ten thousand, please have them made. I am enumerating below some of the matters requiring looking into and changing:

1. The most important is that the inner margin is not sufficient and it is difficult to read the book. I do not know why this mistake has been made. The width of the page is too small. This takes away from the attractiveness, but what is more important is this business of the inner margin. The book does not open sufficiently well for one to read it properly. Would it not be possible to have a wider page with the same printed forms which you have already got.
2. The back of the binding should be neater without the curving lines. I would prefer a different colour.
3. The dust cover also might be changed.
4. The paper of the book does not always appear to be uniform.

In a new edition the page should be definitely bigger, the type possibly somewhat smaller, the paper slightly thinner, and the index in much smaller type. The whole book will then be about 500 to 550 pages.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

## 2. To Richard J. Walsh<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
19 April 1946

Dear Mr. Walsh,

I suppose the American edition of my book *The Discovery of India* will be coming out soon. I find that a few copies have been sent to America by some U.S. office here. More could not be sent as they are not available in the market.

I should like you to send complimentary copies of the book on my behalf to a number of friends in America. For the moment I can't draw up a list of them and I suppose you could make a list more easily. I might, however, mention the following names:

President Truman

Mrs. Roosevelt

Henry Wallace

Sumner Welles

Congressman Cellar

Louis Fischer

Frances Gunther

Claire Boothe Luce

Roger N. Baldwin of the Civil Liberties Union

Anup Singh

My two nieces — Nayantara Pandit & Rita Pandit and Benton who used to be in Chicago University and who now, I believe, is an under-secretary of state or some such thing

Norman Thomas

Mrs. Paul Robeson

Of course you will give a copy on my behalf to Pearl Buck. Many other names will suggest themselves to you. Please send a copy to Kishna Menon in London.

How do matters stand in regard to translation of the book into European languages, especially Spanish?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

### 3. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 25, 1946

My dear Nilima,

I have your telegram. I have no time to revise the book for the second edition. Two minor errors were pointed out to me by someone but I have lost trace of them. If any such errors come to my notice later I shall let you know.

I want to know exactly what the second edition is going to be like in size, shape, type, binding, cover, price etc. It should be possible for you to have dummy copies made previously for inspection. The price should be definitely lower.

I have just received the following telegram from Calcutta:

Pray permit publication of ten thousand copies *Discovery of India* within three months at rupees five each. Royalty rupees ten thousand in advance. Letter follows — Book Emporium Limited.

No letter has come so far. Naturally I cannot give them permission over your head. But this telegram itself indicates how necessary it is to reduce the price of the book.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

### 4. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 29, 1946

My dear Nilima,

I have sent a reply to your telegram. As a matter of fact I have already written to you fully. You can go ahead with arrangements for the second edition of twenty thousand. But I want full particulars about this edition and later on dummy copies. As I have said, the price must be definitely lower. I did not particularly like the paper of the last

1. J.N. Collection.

edition. It hardly seemed like the sample you had first sent me. I hope you will arrange for more suitable paper.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 5. To V.K. Krishna Menon<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
5 May 1946

My dear Krishna,

Chandralekha arrived here today and gave me your letter of 27th April. I am sending a brief reply. Perhaps I might write more later. But it is not an easy matter to discuss the important issues that we are facing in a letter. I should love to have an opportunity of a talk with you so that I could tell you of the internal situation in India. It is always difficult to understand this from abroad. It is a complicated situation both within the Congress and outside it.

I appreciate all that you have written, but you must remember that we have to function within certain limitations due to that internal situation. I am writing this after the first meeting of the conference. We have viewed this Simla affair with considerable disfavour, but it was difficult to refuse the invitation. During the last five or six weeks since the Cabinet delegation has been here no progress has been made in any direction. Perhaps it might be better to say that there has been a marked deterioration. Anyway I suppose the next ten days or so will show some results, good or bad.

What you write about the international situation is helpful in understanding it. There is a general appreciation of that here, but I must tell you that there has come about a certain change not only in Congress circles but elsewhere also in the attitude to Russia. This is chiefly the result of the feeling against the Communist Party of India and their support of Pakistan and Jinnah. Because the Communist Party is intimately connected with Russia that prejudice has been transferred to some extent to Russia. Also events in the Middle East, especially in Iran, have produced this result. It would be incorrect to say that there is any definite anti-Russian feeling, but it is true that the previous enthusiasm for Russia has considerably lessened. The general opinion is that America as well as Russia are full of the pride of power and

1. V.K. Krishna Menon Papers, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

military might and do not very much care for the high professions they have made. India should, therefore, keep clear of any commitments and, in so far as possible, refuse to be entangled.

I note what you say about my book. I have not seen the proof formes that you have sent yet. Of course there must be an index. I suppose you have received a copy of the book published in India. This contains an index. The publisher can arrange for this. It might help you to make your own index. Anyhow we must arrange for one.

I should like you to come here in June or whenever you can. I have long been of opinion that you should visit India and gain first hand acquaintance with conditions here. By June we should know more clearly where we stand. Perhaps there might be a meeting of the new All India Congress Committee in June.

I received your cable about the Congress presidentship. It is all very well for you to express your pleasure at it, but I am not pleased, and yet I see no way out. I shall write to you more later.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

P.S....

I read out your letter to Gandhiji, Maulana and Patel. Gandhiji said it was a good letter, by which, I suppose, he meant that he agreed with your analysis generally. But he added, much as he would like to follow your suggestions<sup>2</sup> about the interim period, the facts here did not permit him or others to go quite that far.

Jawaharlal

2. Krishna Menon had suggested that the Congress should insist for the interim period on a strong centre... "in which neither the Viceroy nor any other limb of the old empire has a place... The British know that they cannot rely on the army."

## 6. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
10 May 1946

My dear Nilima,  
Your letter of the 5th May. I note what you say about the proposed changes in the second edition. I shall be able to judge of them when I see the dummy.

1. J.N. Collection.

You suggested, I think, that the second edition should consist of 20,000 copies. Obviously if 20,000 copies are printed the price will be proportionately reduced. Also the bigger size of the page will reduce the price somewhat. I am anxious that the price of the second edition should be as low as possible. The larger the edition the lower the price. Modern publishing believes in big editions and low prices. However, we shall consider this when you write to me in more detail.

As for my royalties on the first impression I suggest that you might send them direct to the Punjab National Bank, Allahabad, and ask them to credit it to my account. You can send the account to me to Allahabad.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. To Horace Alexander<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
18 August 1946

Dear Horace,

Thank you for your attempt at appraisal. This is the kind of appraisal that I like.

You are quite right in saying that my book is really two books in one. Indeed I would say it is three or four books in one.

Our knowledge of the period of Indian expansion is so limited that it is difficult to have full political or economic information about it. I imagine that there was some kind of trade with India from the earliest times. Cultural influences followed and then political conquest. The political conquest may not have been directly organised from India. Probably adventurous cadets of royal families went over and took possession. It is evident, however, that they mixed with the people there and as a result a kind of joint governmental system was evolved. Contacts with India must necessarily have been infrequent. So India as such could not exercise any imperialist sway there. It is apparent, both on the political and cultural sides, that a kind of amalgam grew up, a mixture of India and local conditions. When powerful empires grew

1. J.N. Collection. Alexander's letter is not available.



up in South East Asia some of them were certainly imperialist and they tried to conquer and colonise neighbouring countries. India as such did not directly take part in this. Indeed those empires were probably more vital than India at that time. But in any event the religious, cultural and artistic impulse from India was very strong throughout that period and it was common both for the Buddhists and the Hindus.

I do not say anything about the other paragraphs of your letter which make one think so much.

I received another letter from you a few days ago in which a suggestion was made that American experts might be brought out here for our constitution-making. I consulted some of my colleagues and they were all of opinion that this would not be worthwhile.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To Nilima Devi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
September 1, 1946

My dear Nilima,

Your letter of the 30th August. I have received 25 copies of the second edition that you sent.

Krishna Menon has spoken to me of his meeting you. I am glad you got on well together.

As regards your suggestion of bringing out an omnibus volume of my writings, I have no objection to it, but it is quite impossible for me to give any time to this matter. You will have to look elsewhere for this. I do not collect speeches which usually appear in distorted form in newspapers. As for articles, I usually keep a copy. Most of the important ones have appeared in some books. Some of the later ones I sent to Krishna Menon.

You must realise that I am desperately busy with other things.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

## National Herald

### 1. To M. Chalapathi Rau<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27 April 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,

I should like the *Herald* to pay special attention to the developments taking place in the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force. Some of these are rather remarkable and indicate an indefinitely long period of practically British control. Large numbers of British officers are being kept or imported. In the Navy it appears that since the R.I.N. strike large numbers of persons have been dismissed and British officers are being brought in. I enclose a note for you on the R.I.N. which will give you facts.

The future of the army as contemplated by Headquarters now is an army of 250,000 men with an officer personnel of 8,800 including 1,000 emergency commissioned officers plus 700 regulars. This number of 1,700 will be available by April 1947; another 1,000 will be available out of V.C.Os, I.O.Rs etc. This will mean roughly 33% Indians. In addition to this, 2,400 regular British officers are said to be available. The proposed Military Academy is supposed to turn out 300 officers per year. This means that it will take from 20 to 30 years to nationalise the Indian army fully. The method of selection is such that it does not favour Indians.

In the Air Force, while fresh personnel is needed, demobilisation of the technical equipment and medical branches is taking place. This also leads to more British officers coming in, especially as it is proposed to add a number of squadrons to the Air Force.

In all the services there has been and is racial discrimination and differential pay. This is being brought out in the R.I.N. inquiry.

Our basic position is this: We are not concerned with percentages etc.; we want complete control of the Indian Army by an Indian national government and the complete withdrawal of the British army from India. The Government will then decide as to how many foreign experts it needs and what position they should occupy. All this talk of percentages is therefore beside the point except that it is creating vested interests in the defence forces.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

Again this policy obviously does not fit in with Indian independence. Independence, if it means anything at all, means that there is not a single foreign soldier on Indian soil. This policy is, therefore, to be considered in relation to political talks now. There is no reality in these talks if it is presumed that the British army or British control of the army will continue.

We have succeeded in getting newsprint allotment for the *Qaumi Awaz* for two months. I hope we shall be able to continue it after that period also. This paper is doing very good work and must continue. I suggest to you that you might have in the *Herald* a weekly column devoted to the Urdu press. It is extraordinary what these Urdu papers, chiefly Muslim League papers, are writing now. You might ask Hayatullah Ansari<sup>2</sup>, editor of the *Qaumi Awaz*, to supply you with this column.

The position here is still very fluid and no one knows exactly what is going to happen.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. (b. 1911); editor of *Hindustan Weekly*, 1937-42 and since 1945 of *Qaumi Awaz*; member, U.P. Legislative Council, 1952-66; member, Rajya Sabha, 1966-72.

## 2. To Krishna Narain<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1 May 1946

My dear Krishnaji,<sup>2</sup>

I am writing to you about *Qaumi Awaz*. Hayatullah Ansari came here a few days ago and told us that the paper would have to stop unless Government permission for newsprint was forthcoming. Nandan had already done his best and failed. We tried again and Nandan took a great deal of trouble in the matter. We were anxious that the paper should continue for various obvious reasons. Ultimately Nandan succeeded in getting permission for newsprint for another two months. That really means that we shall be able to get newsprint after the two months are over also. You were informed of this by telegram.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (b. 1904); industrialist of Lucknow; managing director of the *National Herald*, 1938-42 and 1945-52.

Subsequently Nandan showed me your telegram asking for Rs. 100,000 immediately for this purpose. This rather took our breath away, for obviously this sum is not forthcoming anyway. No mention of this had been made at the *National Herald's* directors' meeting. I gather that the *Qaumi Awaz* is making a name for itself and is doing good work. There is a consensus of opinion on this point. On the other hand it appears that the management is bad and there is a lot of wastage. Obviously this must be remedied. I wish you would look into this matter and give your advice. The *National Herald* management should take charge of this directly or indirectly. Anyway it is entirely for you to decide what arrangements should be made. I think a considerable saving can be made in various ways. Probably it is desirable, in view of the shortage of newsprint, to reduce the size of the paper. Some foreign services which are not wholly necessary can also be limited. Other changes will suggest themselves to you. Hayat-ullah Ansari, the editor, is a very good man of undoubted ability and integrity but of no business experience or knowledge of management. If you could have a talk with him many matters could be cleared up.

I understand that Nandan is sending you Rs. 5,000. This will tide over present difficulties. I have no doubt that the *Qaumi Awaz* has a great future before it and we should carry on with it. If later you require some more money we should try to find this.

I do not know what has happened to Hawes<sup>3</sup>. Nandan was under the impression that he is joining the *Herald* on the terms offered by you.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. An Indian citizen from Bangalore who worked for a few months in 1946 as the production manager of the *National Herald*.

### 3. To Rafi Ahmad Kidwai<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1 May 1946

My dear Rafi,

We have succeeded after great difficulty in getting permission for newsprint for the *Qaumi Awaz* for two months more. I hope that this

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

permission will be extended later. Meanwhile, it is urgently necessary that the management of the paper should be put on an efficient basis. I should like you to speak to Krishnaji and ask him to undertake this. Assure him that he will have a free hand in the matter. I think much money can be saved if proper arrangements are made. Nandan is sending some money to Krishnaji for the purpose. It is not much but it should help for the present.

I am going to Simla tonight. Everything is rather vague and I am tired of my long stay in Delhi. Pantji has just arrived and I hope to see him this afternoon. He will give you the latest news on his return.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 4. To Hayatullah Ansari<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
1 May 1946

My dear Hayat,

We have managed to get permission for newsprint. Now you must concentrate on putting the venture on an efficient business basis. For this purpose you should consult Krishna Narainji and indeed leave matters largely in his hand. The *Qaumi Awaz* is bound to become a success provided only that its business side is looked after well. It is impossible to go on sinking money in it for long.

I suggested to you that you might reduce the size of the paper in order to conserve newsprint. Please consider this. Also you might consider saving some money on news services which are not wholly necessary. Advertisements can now be canvassed for on the assumption that the paper will continue. The whole business side should be under the supervision of the *Herald* management or as Krishna Narainji says.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

5. To Louise Morin<sup>1</sup>

4 May 1946

Dear Louise,

I have not written to you for an age and I owe you many apologies. The mere fact that I wanted to write to you a more or less satisfactory letter prevented me from beginning it. I asked Indira to write. Three or four days ago, however, I received your letter of the 20th April together with your article on the last days of the League of Nations at Geneva. I feel I must send you a brief acknowledgment of this. A longer letter will have to wait.

I have forwarded your article to the editor of the *Herald* and I have suggested Candide as your *nom de plume*. In future you can send your articles direct to him or through me or Indira. Perhaps it will be better to send them through Indira or me for some time. I have also asked the editor to send you a letter of authority.

The *Herald* will come to you regularly and I am asking Indira to arrange for a weekly in Hindi and possibly one or two other papers also. The Congress news-letter has started coming out and your address will be sent for it.

This is a business letter but I want to tell you that although I do not write often to you we think of you and Jean Jacques frequently. I hope you will send us news of yourself from time to time. I have just come up to Simla and I do not know how long I shall be here. Things are not shaping very well here or in any other country. Still I suppose something worthwhile may ultimately turn up out of this turmoil.

Indira is well and so is her baby-son. My sister Vijayalakshmi Pandit is again a Minister and is terribly busy.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

6. To G.P. Hutheesing<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
23 May 1946

My dear Raja,

I have your telegram and letter. This is just the kind of thing that Sadanand<sup>2</sup> would do.

Of course, the *National Herald* would gladly welcome your going to China on its behalf. But, as you know, the *Herald* cannot afford financially such luxuries at the present moment. If you go more or less on your own, it would be easy to fix up the matter and accredit you as a regular correspondent of the *Herald*. We are likely to have a meeting of the *Herald* directors in Naini Tal on the 4th of June. I am writing to the Editor of the *Herald* and if you like you can communicate with him directly.

We are stuck up here and don't know what future developments may be. We may go away for a few days in between.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L. Hutheesing's letter is not available.
2. S. Sadanand (b. 1900); assistant editor, *Independent*, 1921-22; founder and managing editor, Free Press Journal Publications.

7. To M. Chalapathi Rau<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
26 May 1946

Dear Editor,

As you are aware the situation in Kashmir has taken a very serious turn. All the press messages coming from there are not only censored but are practically official messages. Both the A.P.I. and U.P.I. are completely under the influence of the State authorities. Some arrangements have been made, however, for news to be brought by messenger

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

daily to Rawalpindi and Lahore. I have asked that this news be sent on to you by telegram or letter. You will, therefore, get messages from Shamlal Kaul, Lahore, about the Kashmir situation. These may be considered authentic, but you should naturally exercise your own discretion in regard to them.

The latest reports indicate that a state of official terrorism and frightfulness prevails in Kashmir. The whole valley is under military administration. People are made to crawl in some streets or made to take off their turbans and clean the pavements with them. Far more deaths have occurred by firing than are admitted officially.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To M. Chalapathi Rau<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
14 June 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,  
Raghunandan Saran brought a person to see me today who had been connected with the I.N.A. His name is M. Sivaram<sup>2</sup>. The enclosed paper will tell you what he has so far done and what his qualifications are. He seems to have had a varied experience of newspaper work. Exactly how good he is I cannot say. Normally such persons would make good correspondents in foreign countries, especially in East Asia. If we had the resources I would like to send him to Java, but that cannot be done at present. Saran is asking him to go to Lucknow and see you. You can form your own opinion of him and decide as you like. In any event it might be worth trying him. You need not fix any kind of salary, though presumably you will have to give him some allowance to keep him going. I have told him about our viewpoint about the salary business, that this need not necessarily depend on merit or on seniority or the like. We want to pay a proper salary but

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Sivaram was a journalist who worked in the publicity wing of the Azad Hind Government before coming to India. He was not employed in the *National Herald*. Later, he worked for the *Free Press Journal* and was its editor for some time.



we do not want and cannot compete in this matter with more prosperous concerns.

I enclose an article I have received from Madam Morin from Geneva. You will remember that she uses the pen-name of Candide.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 9. To M. Chalapathi Rau<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
August 25, 1946

My dear Chalapathi Rau,  
Chandralekha has given me your letter of the 24th. I should like to meet you here but I think you did well to stay on in Lucknow for the present. Come to Delhi when you can and then we shall have a talk.

It is obvious that we are going to have heavy weather. We have to face a vast number of intricate problems and vital issues. Yet for the moment the primary issue is the issue of the assassin's knife which the Muslim League has raised. Obviously nothing effective can be done till this matter is settled, one way or the other, and it can only be settled one way. Neither the Congress nor the Government can submit to this kind of gangsterism and cold-blooded murders. We have to be firm, clear in our minds and in our action and yet at the same time we must not lose our sense of proportion and become hysteric.

About Shankar, I agree with what you say and I leave it to you entirely as to how to deal with him. I shall of course meet him in Delhi and speak to him. I do not think Goenka<sup>2</sup> or anybody else is going to start a paper soon in Delhi. It would be a pity if Shankar tied himself again with some capitalist concern or with irresponsible people like those who run the *Free Press* of Bombay. Anyway I suppose you are better able to deal with him than I am.

I see that you have received one or two articles direct from Madam Morin. I am sending you two letters received from her. She wants to be guided a little as to what she should write and how often. I wish you would give her this guidance. She had better send her writings direct to you and not through me.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. Ramnath Goenka (b. 1900); industrialist and proprietor of *The Indian Express*.

I do not know what you think of her articles. But on the whole, they seem to me to be good. They vary of course but they are interesting, reading rather different from the average journalist's account. If you can send her specific directions she would be able to improve and to fit in more with what you require. She is not of course a professional journalist.

So far the *Herald* has not paid her anything. But, knowing that she was in difficulties, I sent her 700 Swiss Francs (equal to Rs. 552/-) last February. I am now again sending her 750 Swiss Francs. That is, in all I have sent her about Rs. 1150. This works out at a little less than Rs. 100 a month. For some time now nothing more need be sent to her. But it would be desirable in future to formalise this payment and make it through the *Herald* office. This can be seen to later. I think she can be of considerable use to you because she is intelligent, hardworking, fairly well-acquainted and friendly with India and she is hundred per cent French woman. There is no side about her and hence she will gladly fall in with your wishes. I think that a little later you might pay her at the rate of roughly Rs. 150 to Rs. 200 or so a month.

I am going to Delhi tomorrow and I suppose I shall have to remain there most of the time now. Please make arrangements that I get the *Herald* regularly there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## Personal

### 1. To Indira Gandhi'

New Delhi  
April 4, 1946

Darling Indu,

I have been thinking of you since my arrival here and I have wanted you to be here with me to cheer me up. At first I was rather worried

about accommodation as I did not want to put a strain on Ratan and Rajan. Shiva Rao immediately offered to have you. I find, however, that it is fairly easy for you to stop here. Upadhyaya has got a room but he can easily shift to a place not far from here.

I have no idea as to how long I shall have to stay here. But it seems to me that these Cabinet Mission negotiations will continue till the end of this month. Most of this time I shall have to be here. Probably things will warm up about the middle of this month.

It is fairly warm here though it is slightly better than in Allahabad. I think it will be a good change for you to come here and meet various types of persons. You can stay just as long as you like. Rajiva, I am afraid, cannot easily come as his coming involves much more preparation.

I have written a letter to Feroze which I am sending to Lucknow. I enclose a copy for you and in case he is in Allahabad you can give it to him. After a day or two I shall probably send you a telegram.

So far as I know there is going to be no move to Simla but this is not certain yet.

Love,

Papu

## 2. To Feroze Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 4, 1946

My dear Feroze,

In Allahabad I mentioned to you the possibility of your going for a while to the *Herald*. For the present I think this is not necessary.

I do not know what you are doing or going to do as soon as your election account business is over. I suppose you will be free in a day or two. If you have nothing particular to do you might be able to make yourself useful here in a rather odd kind of way. There are large numbers of foreign correspondents here, chiefly American and British. While every facility is offered to them on the part of Government and Muslim League practically nothing is done by the Congress and they

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

wander about helplessly. We are now trying to open a kind of a centre for them in New Delhi where they could come for information etc. and where press conferences could also be held if necessary. This is a temporary affair for a month or so. We have asked Dharam Yash Dev to take charge of this. He will do some of the routine work. It is necessary, however, to have one or two other men who can keep in touch with newspaper men here and give them information about the Congress and the general political background in India. Most of these men are woefully ignorant and do not know even simple facts about India. I was wondering if you could come over here for three weeks or so and help in this work. If and when you come you should bring some such publicity material (there is not much of it) as may be available in the A.I.C.C. office or elsewhere.

I should like Indu to come here very much. It will be a change for her. It is, however, not very easy to find suitable accommodation. But there are plenty of people who will gladly have her and you. Shiva Rao has expressed his great willingness. I think on the whole that she and you had better stay here with me as I would like to have both of you near me. This is possible if Upadhyaya stays elsewhere. I understand this can easily be arranged. I am writing to Indu also. Could you send me a telegram to say if you would like to come for the kind of work I have mentioned above. Of course the sooner you come the better.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

### 3. To E.P. Thompson<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
10 April 1946

My dear Palmer,

I have just received your letter<sup>2</sup> of April 1st. Some days ago I learned from the cable from a friend in London about your father's condition.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. E.P. Thompson wrote: "It would give him (Edward Thompson) tremendous pleasure if you could find time to write to him a line. He has been so cut off from his friends — both here and in India — during the past two years that he sometimes becomes depressed with a sense of failure. I am writing to you as I feel you are one of the few people who could encourage him and persuade him of what he has achieved".

All those who know him here, and there are many such people, were greatly distressed at this news. I wish I could meet him and perhaps such a meeting would cheer him up a little. I feel rather helpless about it. Anyway I sent a cable<sup>3</sup> to him which I hope reached him in time for this birthday.

It is quite absurd for your father to feel depressed and have a sense of failure. I do believe that he has achieved a great deal and what he has achieved will live for a long time. Only it is always difficult to measure this type of achievement. He has been a link between England and India. He has influenced many people in India, and I suppose many people in England, and so he has been a real peace-maker between nations and peoples.

I do not know if I shall see him again. I hope I shall; but whether I do so or not, I think of him very often and think of him with great affection and respect for what he has done.

It must be hard for you and your mother, but you have gone through a lot and I suppose can face the ups and downs of the world. I shall be glad if you will write to me occasionally and let me have news of your father as well as of yourself. Write to me to Allahabad.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. Not available.

#### 4. To Edward Thompson<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
10 April 1946

My dear Edward,

I have been thinking of writing to you for a long time past and yet somehow we do not do what we most think of doing. Suddenly a few days ago I was reminded of your birthday and I sent you a cable which I hope reached you in time. As you will see I am here in New Delhi again and the old drama of England and India is being played with some new actors, mostly old ones. It was difficult for the old ones to play

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

new roles but while we remain the same or more or less the same the world changes and perhaps the very compulsion of events may produce changes in us too. I do not know what will happen. I have trained myself, in so far as possible, neither to expect too much from life nor to despair of it. That, at any rate, is some kind of an ideal that I aim at realising it only in part. Whatever happens in India none of us is going to have an easy time. I suppose that rule applies to the greater part of the world today.

But I am not writing to you to discuss world events or happenings in India. Why should I worry you with them or indeed worry myself? What I wanted to tell was that you are often in my thoughts and strangely enough I have thought more of you than ever. Why this has been so I do not know. I have thought of our friendship and what a good influence it has had on me at particular moments of my existence. And then I have thought of how you have influenced considerable numbers of people in India and England not obviously so much as in a large deeper way. I believe you have been one of the very few persons who have made India understood by a number of English people and England understood by many Indians. In these difficult days that is a big thing to achieve, and what is more that achievement is a lasting one.

In my cable I said that I hope to meet you before very long. That was not just a vague wish although it does seem rather odd for me to talk of meeting you when there is no chance of your coming to India or my going to England. Yet I do not know and I have an idea that things will change and will move more rapidly in the future and perhaps I may even come your way. I should love to meet you again and talk about so many things. I wonder if there will be any time for the likes of me when we can be rid of the political questions that afflict us.

Nan and Krishna have been here and they joined me in my cable to you as also Indu. My little grandson is growing up into a stout little fellow completely spoilt by everyone.

I have asked Palmer to write to me from time to time and give me news of you and of himself.<sup>2</sup>

Yours ever,  
Jawaharlal

2. Edward Thompson cabled in reply on 20 April 1946: "Warmest affection, grateful thanks to you all." E.P. Thompson has referred to this letter in his book, *Writing by Candlelight* (London, 1980); "My father read it. . . let the letter drop into the sheet and remarked—Oh Lord, now let thy servant depart in peace."

**5. To Tej Bahadur Sapru<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
13 April 1946

My dear Tej Bahadurji,

Thank you for your letter of the 9th April. I am very sorry to learn that you have not been keeping well since your return. I wish somebody could prevent people from coming and troubling you. You require absolute rest. I know you must inevitably worry about political developments. I wish you would not do so because anyhow it does not help. I suppose matters here will come to some kind of a head within the next few days. For the present we are all rather vague....

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Tej Bahadur Sapru Papers (Microfilm), N.M.M.L. Extracts.

**6. To Rammanohar Lohia<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
17 April 1946

My dear Rammanohar,

When was it I wrote to you last or met you? It seems long ages ago and I have been wondering how you must look now and how you must feel. After all, the inner changes are more important than external ones. I myself have a continuous sensation of changing. But it is really for others to judge what these changes are, good or bad.

I hoped that you might come here on your release, but of course you had to go to Calcutta. Meanwhile, I am stuck up here in the imperial capital which is trying very unsuccessfully to shape its own garb. I have no idea how long this business will last and what its outcome will be.

It was a delight to meet Jayaprakash and to find the same dear and delightful person, so little changed and yet perhaps changed in many ways. We had two brief talks, much too brief, and then he went away.

1. J.N. Collection.

Are you still your old self, bright and intelligent and a little erratic and vagrant? Has life hardened you? But these are questions that you cannot answer. And I shall have to meet you to find out. I hope when we meet you will not look at me as if through a shell.

I was in Assam when your father died and memories of his kindly self came to me. I realised what a grief it must have been to you.

As you must know I have written another book — very subjective as usual. I should like to send you a copy, but I have none here with me. I think the easiest way for me is to enclose a note for the publishers. Even the publisher has, I believe, no copy left. But if there is a copy it will be given to you.

Keep bright and cheerful and do not be over-burdened by the stress of events.

With love,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. To Pitambar Pant<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
17 April 1946

My dear Pitambar,<sup>2</sup>

I received your letter some days ago and read it with interest. I was particularly amused over your description of Professor Mahalanobis' talks about his leftist tendencies. He is fond of repeating this, though I have my doubts as to what exactly his conception of 'left' is. I did not want to cross-examine him on it. It might be interesting to ask him how far he considers, say, Jayaprakash Narayan a leftist.

I am glad you have gone to his laboratory and I think this will do you good. There is nothing special happening now which you could have profitably done. You are employing your time to much better advantage. I have no idea how long you are likely to stay there. That will be for you to judge. If any special need arises for you here or elsewhere I shall send for you. Not otherwise. For the present I do not

1. J.N. Collection.

2. (1920-1973); economist closely connected with the Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta; member, Planning Commission, 1958-71.



see that need. We are all entirely uncertain about future developments and I do not know how long I shall have to stay in Delhi. I may go away for a few days but I shall come back again.

You must be rather isolated from Calcutta, though I suppose you can go there occasionally in a bus. That is both an advantage and a disadvantage. Let me know if you require any money.

I suppose Professor Mahalanobis has left for England or is on the point of doing so. Remember you have gone to him and to his laboratory for special training in a particular job. It does not much matter what people's political and other opinions are so long as you have an opportunity to get this training.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 8. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
2 May 1946

My dear Nan,

I arrived here this morning and am staying with the Maulana at "The Retreat". Our telephone number is 793. I understand that Chand has reached Karachi and is due to reach Delhi either this evening or tomorrow morning. She will come up here with Sarojini and Padmaja on the 5th morning. They will all stay in this house which is big enough.

Sorabji Rustomji<sup>2</sup> gave me a note about your visiting America to present the case for Indians in South Africa before the U.N.O. I was rather taken aback. I do not think any such question arises now or can be considered. Everything depends on developments in India and we cannot even vaguely consider any such proposition at this stage. If there is a change in government here all our subsequent actions will be governed accordingly. If not anything may happen and the question of your or anyone else's going outside India may not arise. The U.N.O.

1. J.N. Collection. Extracts.

2. Leader of a delegation of South African Indians to India at this time seeking the support of the Government and the public against the anti-Indian legislation of the South African Government.

is supposed to meet early in September. During these four months both the national and international situation will change greatly.

I have no idea how long I shall have to stay here. I think I shall keep Chand with me for some length of time. If I can get two days off I shall go with her to Narkanda which is 50 miles from here and which leads to the Kulu Valley.

Indu is leaving for Allahabad on the 4th morning from Delhi. She will spend a week there and then will probably go to Naini Tal, her heavy luggage proceeding to Khali direct. From Naini Tal, after three or four days, she, Feroze and Rajiv will go to Khali. I have suggested to her to go by the bridle path trekking it in easy stages, but I doubt if she will want to do it. As I have written to you I shall try my best to go to Khali myself for a week *via* Naini Tal, but all this depends on developments. You might also go to Khali on a brief visit to form some idea of what the place is like now and how many things have disappeared from the house during these past few years.

Yours,  
Jawahar

## 9. To Indira Gandhi<sup>1</sup>

Simla  
2.5.46

Darling Indu,

I am glad you are spending another day in Delhi. This will enable you to see Chand.

As I have told you our house here is 'The Retreat'. Maulana is staying here and Asaf Ali. It is a big house and I am arranging that Padmaja and Sarojini and Chand should also stay here. Our telephone number is 793.

I hope you will go to Naini Tal before you go to Khali. This break in the journey will make it easier and more comfortable. There is no difficulty in reaching Naini Tal. The heavy luggage should go direct by bus from Kathgodam to Almora and Khali. I shall send you further particulars soon and shall also write some letters to Almora.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

Remember to send me the name of the Jodhpur lady.

Please send a copy of *Discovery* to Mrs. Bulbul Khan, Kasauli, Simla Hills. I met her on the way today.

Love

Papu

# 10. To Claire Boothe Luce<sup>1</sup>

4 May 1946

Dear Claire Boothe Luce,

It was rather odd that I should suddenly make up my mind to write to you just when my mind is occupied with all manner of disturbing problems. The last time I wrote to you was at the end of July 1945 from a remote valley in Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> I had recently come out of prison and I took a fairly early opportunity of sending you a letter. I wrote it encircled by high mountains and glaciers and the mood of the mountains came to me. I still do not know if that letter reached you. Since then I have had several brief messages from you conveyed by other people and I have appreciated them greatly, but I had no acknowledgment of my letter and somehow I waited for this. One rather odd letter written by you came to me through devious routes. This was the note you had given to Wendell Willkie for me. It travelled round the world, went back to America with Wendell Willkie, and then he gave it to someone who ultimately brought it to India. It was very sad reading that note of yours and thinking of Wendell Willkie's death. His little book, *One World*, and various other writings and speeches of his had brought him very near to me and I looked forward to meeting him one day in America or elsewhere. I was in Ahmednagar prison when news of his death came and it was a shock to all of us there. We had made up our minds that he would play a big and brave part in coming events. Why is it that in this world of little men, so few of the big ones survive to make a difference to all of us?

I have not written to you all these months but I have often thought of you and to some extent I have followed your activities. Just now when

1. J.N. Collection.

2. Not available.

I am sitting here in Simla with Stafford Cripps and others, again in India, my mind goes back to just four years ago when something similar was happening and you also formed part of that picture. Perhaps this is the reason why I suddenly decided to write to you. The picture came back to me, vivid and lively, and suddenly I felt a certain lack in it. I was unhappy in Delhi in 1942 and I suppose I am not too happy even now, not only about Indian events but the world in general. Yet these four years have made a tremendous difference to all of us and you have had more than your share of unhappiness. I believe I have grown somewhat more detached than I used to be and I am not so tossed about by events. Your decision to give up political activities shows how you must have changed also. I wonder when we are likely to meet and possibly exchange to some extent our experiences. I should like very much to do so, but most of us seem to be prisoners of circumstance and can seldom do exactly what we want to.

I wrote another book which I have called *The Discovery of India*. It has been published here in India, but it is difficult to send copies to America. An American edition will come out soon and I have asked my publishers to send a copy to you. I am afraid it is not very light reading, except may be in parts, but it does represent in some measure what I thought in those years in prison. No one, I suppose, can be completely frank with himself or with others, no one certainly who is tied up with public affairs. Yet I have tried to some extent to be frank with myself.

In this world of turmoil and conflict and hatred, it is not easy to look forward with confidence and optimism. I am afraid we are going to have a hard time in India as elsewhere. But I do believe that India will emerge not only as an independent nation but as something different and at the same time fundamentally same as she has been. I think she has a part to play in the world.

I wrote to you in my letter from Kashmir that just a few hours before my arrest in August 1942 your letter was handed to me. It was late in the evening and I could not read it then. Very early the next morning I was arrested and taken to Ahmednagar. Your un-read letter accompanied me. It was the only letter that came to me there for many months. I could not reply to it as I could not write to anyone for a long period and then only to two or three near relatives. So it happened your letter was a companion to me for several months and it served a more important purpose, because of this, than it might otherwise have been. I want to thank you for this.

I do not know what will happen in these Indo-British negotiations. They have already dragged on far too long and we are where we were.

Perhaps the next week or two might make a difference. At present the outlook is not good. One thing is certain: that India cannot remain where she is or go back. Changes and big changes must come. Whether those changes will be for the good or not I am still unable to say.

With all good wishes,

Yours,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**11. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>**

Simla  
May 7, 1946

My dear Nan,

Chand arrived two days ago. She is looking fresh and charming and little changed from what she was four years ago, just a little maturer and more grown up and a little Americanised. I shall keep her here for the present. My own stay is entirely uncertain.

Sundar has not arrived yet but he is expected today. This business of sending Chand's clothes etc. with Sundar has not been too well organised.

I do not know where to write to Indu. I suppose she will be leaving soon for Naini Tal and then Khali. Much as I want to go to Khali myself I can make no plans at all and everything is uncertain.

Yours,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**12. To Vijayalakshmi Pandit<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
23 May 1946

My dear Nan,

Thank you for sending me the correspondence and particulars about the I.N.A. medical men.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I just don't know what I am going to do during the next few days. I want to come up to Naini Tal and to go to Khali for at least a few days. We are going to have some kind of a gap period here. We have fixed June 4th for the *Herald* directors' meeting at Naini Tal and on June 5th probably the U.P. Council will meet there. But I am worried about Faridkot and Kashmir. My visit to Faridkot will take two days. It is just possible, however, that I might dash off to Kashmir.

I do not know where Indu is now. I enclose a letter for her. If she is gone to Khali send it on to her.

### 13. To E.P. Thompson<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
23 May 1946

My dear Palmer,

Thank you for your letter of the 7th May which I was happy to receive. I am very glad that my letter to your father reached him in time and gave him some comfort.<sup>2</sup>

I do not know to what mis-statements in the press you refer associating your father with the Amery regime. So the question of correcting them hardly arises. Of course if your mother writes to me her letter will be welcome.

We are all rather worn out here in New Delhi after nearly two months of these talks. There is no end to them yet and the future is uncertain.

I hope you will keep in touch with me by writing to me from time to time.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. Edward Thompson Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Edward Thompson died on 30 April 1946.

**14. To Krishna Hutheesing<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
June 26, 1946

My dear Krishna,

I have just received your letter of the 23rd and am very sorry to learn of Harsh's incident. It must be a painful business but I suppose it will not take him long to get over it.

I received your letter from Ooty. I wrote to Raja about that time and hope that he will share my letter with you.

As you will notice, the A.I.C.C. is meeting in Bombay on the 6th and 7th July. This is going to be a strictly business meeting—no visitors. The Working Committee will probably meet a day earlier. I am hard pressed for time but anyhow I shall try to reach there by the 5th morning at the latest. My programme is uncertain and there is still an odd chance of my going to Kashmir before the A.I.C.C. meeting.

Krishna Menon is here. I am likely to bring him with me to Bombay. Could you make some arrangements for his stay with some friends. I do not want him to go to a hotel.

Indu is still in Khali and is likely to remain there.

Yours,  
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**15. To Padmaja Naidu<sup>1</sup>**

Wardha  
8.8.46

Bebec dear,

Thank you for sending me *The Times of India* review. I had not seen it.

On my way here I read your report about the atrocities in Hyderabad villages. I saw it in *The Bombay Chronicle*. Now I have got your full

1. Padmaja Naidu Papers, N.M.M.L.

report. It is ghastly reading and your moderate language makes it all the more powerful. What am I to do? What can one do about it? Everything is so rotten at the base and we try to apply some soothing ointment at the surface.

This journey of mine, from Allahabad to Wardha, has been a terrible one. There were any number of mishaps and towards the end we succeeded in killing a little boy of 5 or 6. It was a clean road with fields on either side. We were going (by car) about 35 miles an hour. Suddenly a child rushed forward from somewhere — the car swerved — brakes were applied. It was too late and there was a sickening thud as the mudguard or some part of the car hit the child. He lay groaning by the side of the road. His mother and father ran up. We were anxious to bring him to a hospital with all possible speed. It was difficult to get the parents to agree. At last we managed to take the little one. Probably he died soon enough but we dared not make sure — When the doctor saw him in Wardha, he was dead.

Thus we reached Wardha — very late — with the Working Committee waiting for me. I went there straight with a few drops of the child's blood on my sleeves.

So I am not in a happy mood. This has been a novel experience for me.

Love,

Jawahar

## General

### 1. To Derek Lawson<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 3, 1946

Dear Mr. Lawson,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter<sup>3</sup> of the 26th. I entirely agree with much that you say. I have not been silent on the subject and recently in Bombay I spoke very strongly.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. An Anglo-Indian resident in Kanpur.

3. He wrote that the small Anglo-Indian community had been subjected to insults and malicious propaganda by politicians.



I might inform you, however, that the story of a woman being stripped of her uniform in Bombay is not true. Inquiries were made about this and I believe that the police came to the conclusion that it was a false rumour.

I want to do everything in my power to prevent mob violence of any kind, and more especially any kind of attack or assault on individuals, whoever they might be. As for Anglo-Indians, they are and should always be treated as full citizens of India who will share in the freedom to come.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 2. To Horace Alexander<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
March 3, 1946

Dear Alexander,

Thank you for your letter of the 22nd. I hope to be in Calcutta on the 8th and 9th and perhaps the 10th, though I am not sure. I shall certainly want to meet you then. But I fear I shall not be able to find too much time for a long talk.

I realise the futility of any effective action on the food front through the present Government apparatus. It may be possible to devise local and representative committees which might be of great help. I think your unit should certainly act as liaison between the administration and the voluntary efforts.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

### 3. To Mirza Ismail<sup>1</sup>

6.3.46

My dear Sir Mirza,

Thank you for your letter of March 1st which I have just received. I am interested to know of the formation of a society for the promotion of Indian culture and art. Every Indian must agree with this objective and so I welcome the step you have taken. I am only a little apprehensive about the actual work that is going to be done. So many of our desirable societies function ineffectively. But under your guidance it might achieve something worthwhile.

About a secretary, it is obvious that you should have a really first rate person with all manner of qualifications. I have no one in view at present and can make no suggestions. Tomorrow I am leaving Allahabad for various places, ending up in Singapore. So I am afraid I shall have little chance to help you in the selection.

As suggested by you, I am sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Arthur Lall,<sup>2</sup> New Delhi.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Arthur Samuel Lall (b. 1911); member of the Indian Civil Service; Permanent Representative to the U.N., 1954-59; Ambassador to Austria, 1959-63. His publications include *Modern International Negotiations*, *How Communist China Negotiates* and *The Emergence of Modern India*.

### 4. To J. Alvarez del Vayo<sup>1</sup>

6.3.46

My dear Del Vayo,<sup>2</sup>

I owe you many apologies for not writing to you or even acknowledging your cables. I had hoped to write for the *Nation* and so I postponed a reply. I would sooner write for the *Nation* than for almost any periodical. But events have been too much for me and I have been so hustled about both physically and mentally that it has been quite impossible

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Foreign Minister of the Republican Government in Spain; later on the staff of the American journal *Nation*.

to write. I would not like to send just anything to the *Nation*. One of your correspondents managed to get me in Delhi and had a long talk with me and I understand this has appeared in the *Nation*.<sup>3</sup> This kind of thing is easy enough. Perhaps later I might write for you but sometimes I feel a little overwhelmed by a variety of problems attacking me at the same time. That, I suppose, is a common experience for many people all over the world today. Anyway forgive me for the delay in answering your cable. Soon I shall go to Malaya on a brief visit. And then this British Cabinet Mission to India will naturally absorb much of my time. We are going to have no quiet time here or elsewhere.

I wonder if you (or the *Nation*) are interested in the Indian States problem. Few people outside India know anything about it, except that they have heard about our bejewelled maharajahs and nawabs. They imagine that these States are something apart from India proper, which of course they are not. If you are interested you might like to have some articles on them by a young colleague of mine, Dwarka Nath Kachru, who is one of the general secretaries of the All India States People's Conference, which represents the people of these States. I have suggested to him to send you one or two articles on the subject. You can pass them on to the appropriate editor of the *Nation*.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

3. See Appendix, item 3.

## 5. The Women's Movement in India<sup>1</sup>

I am glad that this selection of speeches and writings of Rajkumari Amrit Kaur is being published so as to reach a wider public. There is always a touch of distinction in what she says or writes, the mark of a sensitive person who has fought her way through many of life's problems. She is enraged at the ugliness and poverty and degradation that she sees, and yet is fortunate enough to have attained a certain poise and equilibrium which enable her to direct her energy and righteous

1. Allahabad, 7 March 1946. Foreword to *Challenge to Women* (Allahabad, 1946) by Amrit Kaur.

indignation into fruitful channels of constructive effort. She made the vast field of women's emancipation and progress her own and has been one of the builders of the women's movement in India. From this she drifted inevitably into the wider domain of India's freedom movement, for without that freedom there could be no emancipation for man or woman. Richer in experience, and with that mark of suffering which is the lot of so many in India today, she devotes herself to the great cause which is so dear to us. But, unlike many of us who perform frequently on the public platform, most of her work is done quietly and away from the public eye. Only occasionally she strays on to that platform, or a piece of good writing followed by her initials betrays the writer of distinction.

But Amrit Kaur's principal love continues to be the women's movement, and it is right that this should be so. For the women of India, for all their charm and intelligence and capacity for good work, have been too long neglected. I believe that India has a great future, but I also believe that real and rapid progress in India will only come when our womenfolk get really moving and rid themselves of everything that suppresses them and keeps them back. Because I see clear and definite signs of this movement, I am full of hope for India, and because our national movement has been largely instrumental in releasing women from many an old bond, that movement has demonstrated its essential soundness and vitality.

So I commend this little book to the reader, and may there be many who profit by reading it.

## 6. To Choithram Gidwani<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
4 April 1946

My dear Choithram,

I have been asked about the funds presented to me as purses during my last visit to Sind. You will remember that I divided them up for various causes. Some money was set aside for election work. Some money was given to the Sind P.C.C. The former was left with you to be used at your discretion for the elections then pending in Sind. It

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

was not part of the Congress funds which had been given separately to the P.C.C. As such the responsibility for allocation and spending of this election fund money was entirely yours and those of you who were connected with this election work. It is not desirable to mix up election funds with Congress funds. We have set them apart in other provinces and the same policy should be followed in Sind. The responsibility for spending election fund money which I had allotted was entirely yours.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 7. To J.B. Kripalani<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
8 April 1946

Dear Comrade,

You are perhaps aware the Government of India have put forward a proposal for introducing the metric system in the coinage of India.<sup>2</sup> I presume this question will come up before the Central Assembly and the Congress party there will have to make up its mind as to what it should do in regard to it. A few days ago I noticed a statement by Mahatma Gandhi in the press asking the Congress members of the legislatures to throw out this measure. I do not know what particular reason Mahatmaji has for this advice.<sup>3</sup> I hope to discuss this matter with him.

I am writing to you to request you to put this matter on the agenda of the Working Committee so that we can consider it in consultation with Gandhiji. I might inform you that a few weeks ago I issued a statement in my capacity as President-elect of the Indian Science Congress supporting the principle underlying this measure and asking the

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. A bill to amend the Indian Coinage Act had been introduced in the Legislative Assembly on 18 February 1946. It aimed at converting the rupee to 100 cents from 64 pies.

3. Mahatma Gandhi had stated on 17 March 1946 that "even in the country of the rulers the decimal coinage has not been introduced.... For some years to come the poor will be sacrificed as usual in the interests of the modern trade."

members of the legislatures to adopt it. Previously the National Planning Committee expressed itself strongly in favour of some steps in this direction. There is undoubtedly a feeling that the exact way in which the government has approached the question is not wholly satisfactory. Some people also think that the metric system should be extended to weights and not only to be confined to money. However this may be you will realise that I am put in a somewhat difficult position by Mahatmaji's statement and I shall be glad if the matter is considered by the Working Committee in consultation with Gandhiji.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 8. To D.N. Wadia<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
9 April 1946

Dear Dr. Wadia<sup>2</sup>,

I have received a cable from Huxley<sup>3</sup>, London, a copy of which I enclose. I wonder if you could help me in suggesting names for the posts mentioned in this cable. Perhaps the National Institute of Sciences has such names on its rolls, or anyway you could consult your colleagues. I imagine that a bright young man would be preferable to a middle-aged person who has got rather lost in the ruts of academic work. If you have any suitable names in view I should like to discuss them with you before I go away from Delhi.<sup>4</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. At this time President of the National Institute of Sciences, Delhi; eminent geologist.
3. On 4 April 1946, Julian Huxley on behalf of the preparatory commission engaged in planning possible future activities of the U.N.E.S.C.O. wrote that he was "anxious to obtain services of an Indian on our staff. Suggest names for me for following posts, counsellor, social science section in field of history or preferably human geography, counsellor, arts section preferably."
4. Similar letters written to P.C. Mahalanobis and K.T. Shah on 9 April and to Sir John Sargent on 17 April are not printed. They are available in J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**9. To Bhakt Darshan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
9 April 1946

Dear Bhakt Darshan<sup>2</sup>,

I have received your letter of the 4th. We considered your report at the Central I.N.A. Committee meeting. You will be informed of our decision. Meanwhile, I am instructing the Bank at Kotdwara to the effect that you can draw upon my account. The balance there is Rs. 19,505-4-0. This totals to Rs. 20,000. You have got, according to your letter, Rs. 1,000 with you. You can now draw from time to time from my account at the Kotdwara branch of the Bharat Bank Ltd. This money should be enough for you for some time. I am anxious that you should concentrate on the constructive activities for I.N.A. personnel.

In future you must correspond and deal directly with the central office in Delhi and not with the U.P.P.C.C.

I enclose a copy of my letter to the Bank.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (b. 1912); Deputy Minister of Education, Government of India, 1963-67; Deputy Minister of Transport and Shipping, 1967-69; Minister of State for Education, 1969-72.

**10. To Jullan Huxley<sup>1</sup>**

17 April 1946

Dear Mr. Huxley,

I have received your two cables and have sent you a reply<sup>2</sup> to them by cable. As you perhaps know I am at present engaged in difficult and arduous work in connection with the visit of the British Cabinet delegation to India. Apart from this I am not very competent to select the kind of persons indicated by you in your cablegrams. I have, therefore, referred the matter to a number of organisations as well as to some

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. Not available.

individuals who may be in a position to know such persons. This kind of thing, no doubt, takes time and I do not know when I shall be in a position to suggest names to you. Your cables indicate that you expect an early reply. I doubt if I can send you an early reply. Even if I get a number of suggestions I would personally not be acquainted with the persons recommended. However, I shall try to do what I can in the matter. Meanwhile, perhaps, you could let me have fuller details which would help us in selecting persons.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 11. To Julian Huxley<sup>1</sup>

20 April 1946

Dear Mr. Huxley,

It strikes me that the best person for you to consult in regard to a suitable student of philosophy who might be of use to you in the U.N.E.S.C.O. is Sir Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. He is in America at present somewhere in California. I do not know his programme but he is likely to visit England on his way back. Being himself an eminent philosopher he is in touch with others in India and he has himself trained a number of people. If it is possible for you to get in touch with him he could, no doubt, make suggestions. Perhaps you could get his present address from the India Office in London.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

#### 12. To G.E.B. Abell<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
April 25, 1946

Dear Mr. Abell,

I have received the following telegram from Mr. Jairamdas Daulatram, Hyderabad (Sind):

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.



Messrs. Ramchand and Jhamatmal of Messrs. N.G. Malwani & Sons, important Sind merchants doing business at Fort Dekock Hill station near Pudano, capital of Sumatra, been kidnapped about fifteen days ago by Indonesians of Fort DeKock. Their relatives here exceedingly anxious; have asked me request you approach Indonesian Government telegraphically take immediate steps recover both persons and wire your action taken. Their firm here prepared pay all expenses incurred. Kindly treat urgent, wire express Indonesian Prime Minister.

I presume that the External Affairs Department of the Government of India, which is directly under the Viceroy, would normally deal with such matters. I hope that it will take the necessary steps to inquire into this matter. Meanwhile, I shall be grateful if the following cable<sup>2</sup> addressed to Dr. Shahrir is sent on my behalf. I cannot send it directly as there is no cable service functioning between India and Indonesia. I suppose the usual way is for cables to be sent through SEAC. Probably you know better how to deal with such matters. Anyway I shall be grateful if this cable is sent and shall gladly pay any expenses incurred.

Thanking you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

2. Not available.

### 13. To J.B. Kripalani<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
27 April 1946

Dear Comrade,

I enclose a cheque for Rs. 208. This money has come to me in an odd way.

You will remember that in 1928 an Independence of India League was started. I was secretary of this and Shivaprasad Gupta was treasurer. The League faded away after a year or two. A few weeks ago I was informed that the Benares Bank (in liquidation) had an account of the Independence of India League which apparently Shivaprasad Gupta had

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

opened. I corresponded with the liquidator and he has agreed to pay me the sum as the sole living representative of the League. I have now received this sum of Rs. 208/- through Bhupendra Kumar Gupta, grandson of Shivaprasad Gupta. This represents four dividends paid by the liquidator. Presumably more dividends will follow.

Not knowing what to do with this money I have decided to hand it over to the A.I.C.C. which is carrying on the struggle for independence most effectively in India. Will you kindly send a receipt for this amount to Bhupendra Kumar Gupta whose letter I enclose?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**14. To K.T. Shah<sup>1</sup>**

29 April 1946

My dear Shah,

I have received your letter of the 25th April as well as your previous letters. I am afraid there is no chance of my being free for the Planning Committee for the next three weeks or more. Indeed it is quite impossible to fix up anything so long as the present very fluid situation does not take shape. I suggest that you may make your own programme according to your convenience. I should like to meet you of course but just at present I am distracted and distraught by the kind of life one has to live in Delhi. I shall write to you again.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No. 3490/H/II-2, Maharashtra Government Records, Police Commissioner's office.

**15. To Julian Huxley<sup>1</sup>**

27 April 1946

Dear Dr. Huxley,

As desired by you I am giving some names for the U.N.E.S.C.O. preparatory organisation. I have been so occupied with other matters here

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

that I could not give enough time to this selection business. I communicated with a number of people, among them being Sir John Sargent who informed me that he had also heard from you on the subject. I am unable to give full particulars about all the names mentioned below nor am I sure that all of them are in a position to go to England or wherever they might have to go. I know all of them personally. It is a little difficult for me to say whether anyone of them will fit in your organisation. You can judge for yourself from their qualifications.

(1) Humayun Kabir:- Age 40. Brilliant academic record in Calcutta and Oxford universities. Stood first in various examinations up to M.A. in Calcutta. First class in Modern Greats in Oxford. Various university prizes, scholarships and medals. He went abroad as a Government State scholar.

At Oxford he was secretary and librarian of the Oxford Union, President of the Jowett Society and the Indian Majlis. He was lecturer in philosophy, Andhra University, also lecturer in philosophy and English lecturer, Post-graduate Department, Calcutta University. He is a well-known Bengali writer and has also written a number of books in English. Knows German and some French. Has translated Kant's *Uber Philosophie Uberhaupt* into English. He is a member, at present, of the Bengal Legislative Council. He was chairman of the ethics and politics section of the Indian Philosophical Congress. His address is 26 Amir Ali Avenue, Calcutta.

(2) Dr. Nirmal Kumar Bose, M.A. Ph.D. :- Lecturer, Calcutta University. He has worked on Indian demography and has written several books. Age 45.

(3) Mohammad Mujeeb:- Age 43. Resident of Lucknow, U.P. Took honours from school of modern history at Oxford, 1922. Subsequently went to Germany for 3½ years. Knows German and Russian and some French. Has been professor of history and politics in the Jamia Millia Islamia (National Muslim University) for many years and is still there. Has published many books in Urdu, including *History of Political Thought*, *History of Russian Literature*, and *History of the World*. Is at present engaged in writing a history of Indian civilisation. He will not be free to leave India till November next.

(4) Dr. Shaheed Suhrawardy:- A good scholar, fine linguist and art critic with knowledge of both Indian and modern art. He was till recently professor of fine arts in the Calcutta University. Spent many years with League of Nations and more especially with the Committee for Intellectual Cooperation which had its headquarters in Paris. His age is about 57. He is at present a member of the Public Service Commission, Bengal. Both from knowledge and experience he would

be particularly fitted for the counsellorship of the arts section, but I do not know what his own reactions to the offer might be.

(5) Dr. Puntambekar:- A historian. Professor of Political Science, Benares Hindu University. Age probably 46.

As I have said above, I am not sure about the ability of some of these persons to leave India at short notice. I would have picked out two names from this list, especially Humayun Kabir's and Shaheed Suhrawardy's, but again cannot say whether Suhrawardy would like to go. So Humayun Kabir's name remains. I think he would be a good choice if only one person is to be chosen. He is a young man of varied interests and likely to fit in into any organisation. Mujeeb's is also a good name, but he cannot leave till November.

I am sending a copy of this letter to Sir John Sargent.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 16. To Albert Mayer<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
1 May 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

As you are perhaps aware, various conversations have been going on here in New Delhi between the representatives of the British Cabinet and Indian political leaders in regard to the future of India. I do not yet know what these will lead to. But in any event we are in charge of a number of Provincial Governments today and we are anxious to get things moving there. I am writing to you more especially on behalf of the United Provinces Government and at the request of my friend Mr. Govind Ballabh Pant who is the Prime Minister there at present. We would very much like to have your advice in regard to various matters relating to planning village reconstruction and the ordered development of community life more especially in our rural areas. You will remember your writing to me on this subject. I found that there was a great deal of agreement between your outlook and mine. .<sup>2</sup>

Will it be possible for you to come to India for a period of say six months or a year for this purpose? Of course if both parties so desire in the interest of the work you can stay on.

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

I am not writing to you in any further detail at present as I should like to have your reactions to this proposal. We have an enormous task before us complicated at present by the food scarcity and famine conditions prevailing in some parts of India. The United Provinces have not been so badly affected by the food scarcity though there are considerable difficulties in providing towns and cities, which are rationed, with sufficient food. The real famine areas are in the south and the west, but no one seems to know, for lack of proper statistics, what the position will be a month or two hence. In any event it will be a very difficult period. We have been asking for foodgrains and foodstuffs from America and other countries. All help of this kind would be very welcome indeed, and yet probably the major difficulty in India is lack of proper distribution and the present Government is not competent enough to deal with this matter.

Could you kindly cable to me to my address at Allahabad as to whether it would be possible for you to come over to India to advise the United Provinces Government in regard to future plans of reconstruction and planning?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 17. To D.G. Tendulkar

New Delhi  
1 May 1946

My dear Tendulkar,

I am sorry for the delay in acknowledging your letters of the 2nd and 11th April. I received the four copies of *Gandhiji*. I gave three of these to the members of the Cabinet delegation here, and the fourth was given to George Merrell,<sup>2</sup> the American Minister here. All of them appreciated the gift very much.

I do not know why you want me to sign these copies. The book is not mine and my autograph in it is not appropriate. Do not trouble

1. D.G. Tendulkar Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. (1898-1962); Commissioner of the U.S. to India, 1945-46 and Charge d' Affaires, 1946-47; served for sometime as U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan.

yourself about sending copies to President Truman and others in America. But you might, if you like, write to Mr. George R. Merrell, American Commissioner, New Delhi, and ask him if he would care to have some copies for important American libraries. You may mention that you are writing at my instance.

As for Turkey, Persia, Egypt etc., it is difficult to send books there and I shall ask Maulana Azad.

I should like you to send two or three copies to Mr. Francis Brunel, 19 Prithviraj Road, New Delhi. You have already sent him three copies I think and he has presented them to the Bibliotheque Nationale, to Andre Gide etc. He can make good use of two or three more copies for big libraries in France. As a matter of fact he told me that he had bought some copies of your second edition for this purpose.

Do not send me any copies to Delhi because they are too heavy to be carried about. If I want any I shall write to you. Have you got a large supply with you still?

I am sending you a copy of my new book *Discovery of India*.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

## 18. On Destruction of War Material<sup>1</sup>

During my travels in various parts of India in connection with the elections and otherwise, I have heard repeated reports of the destruction of war material by the American or British authorities. In Assam graphic details were given to me of this mass destruction not only of the implements of war but also of many articles which are in great demand in civilian life. I myself saw heaps of destroyed material in many places. Brief reports occasionally appeared in the newspapers and were sometimes officially denied.

This morning as I reached Bakshi-ka-Talao, the aerodrome 14 miles from Lucknow, I saw a sight which fairly staggered me. I had seen it

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 16 May, *The Hindustan Times*, 17 May 1946.

before also, but perhaps my mind was otherwise occupied and I had not paid too much attention to it. I saw hundreds of aeroplanes in various stages of destruction, some were still whole and apparently airworthy, some had their wings clipped off, yet others were being smashed up in different ways. Hundreds of Rolls Royce engines were lying there, forlorn and forsaken, awaiting destruction. There were bombers and fighters and many other varieties of aircraft. I was told that at least 2,000 planes had been smashed up in this place which was appropriately named Aircraft Breakdown Centre.

Near Allahabad at Phaphamow, I am told that 2,000 bicycles were laid down on the ground and steam-rollers went over them.

These are just a few instances of the colossal destruction that is going on apparently all over India. What the reasons for this policy are, a layman's mind is unable to fathom. It is obvious that the Rolls Royce engines are not only valuable but can be of very great use in India in a variety of ways. Trucks, bicycles, radio sets, watches and numerous other articles can also be of great use. Instead of using all these, large sums are being spent in destroying them.

If the present structure of society demands such periodic destruction, the sooner that structure is changed the better.

## 19. An Erroneous Contradiction<sup>1</sup>

The G.H.Q. in India have denied my statement that war material was being destroyed in large quantities. In regard to the story of bicycles I was informed of it by people in Allahabad, and I had no personal knowledge. But I have myself seen what was being done at the Aircraft Breakdown Centre near Lucknow. Whether the aircraft or engines being destroyed there are serviceable or not I cannot judge, nor do I know what the cost of reconditioning might be, but I do know that there are people prepared to buy those Rolls Royce engines as well as some other material. And they are unable to do so.

I have sufficient reliable information also about the destruction of other material at various places. I cannot say whether this was British or American material. It is not good enough to issue denials of this

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 18 May 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 19 May 1946.

kind when there is certainly reliable evidence of destruction of serviceable material. The army authorities may only consider this matter from the army point of view. In India, it must be remembered, even an old kerosene oil tin is a useful commodity. In particular, American standards are so different from those of India that something that is not good enough for them may be of great use here.

**20. To Julian Huxley<sup>1</sup>**

Simla

May 8, 1946

Dear Dr. Huxley,

I have already sent you some names which you might consider for counsellorship in the U.N.E.S.C.O. preparatory organisation. There is another name which has been strongly recommended to me by the Vice-Chancellor of the Calcutta University. This is Dr. Nihar Ranjan Ray<sup>2</sup>, head of the department of fine arts in the University of Calcutta. I am told he has knowledge also of modern museum techniques. I am not personally acquainted with him.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

2. (1904-1981); eminent scholar in Indian art and culture; Chairman of the Indian Council of Historical Research at the time of his death.

**21. To M.N. Saha<sup>1</sup>**

Simla

May 8, 1946

My dear Saha,

Your letter of May 4th. I have sent some names to Julian Huxley. I have especially recommended Humayun Kabir's name. I understand that Huxley has been in touch with Sir John Sargent also.

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.



I quite appreciate what you have written about the negotiations that are at present going on. I need not tell you that I agree with what you say about a strong centre. More I cannot discuss.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**22. To R.C. Majumdar<sup>1</sup>**

Simla  
12 May 1946

Dear Dr. Majumdar,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter. I was glad to hear from you because I have enjoyed reading some of your books about the ancient Indian colonies.

I am afraid it is a little late now to send names to Huxley. The suggested post is a temporary one for six months only beginning from June, but perhaps for the permanent appointment in December next other names might be considered.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. (1888-1980); historian

**23. To Paul Robeson<sup>1</sup>**

May 16, 1946

My dear Paul Robeson,

It was a pleasure to receive your letter of May 1st. I have sent you the following cable :

I send my greetings to the mass meeting convened by Council on African Affairs demanding colonial freedom. Without colonial freedom and equal opportunities for all races there is going to be no peace

1. J.N. Collection.

in the world and we shall inevitably drift to another world conflict and disaster. All those who want to avoid this catastrophe must therefore realise the imperative necessity of solving this problem. Nazism and fascism have been crushed in their homelands but their spirit still continues. In South Africa Indians and Africans are being treated in typically Nazi fashion. We in India stand for the elimination of colonialism everywhere and for racial equality and we join you in your demand.

My niece Chandralekha arrived here a few days ago and brought us news of you and your wife and your son. Is there any chance of your coming to India? I suppose it is difficult for anyone to make programmes too far ahead, for we move in rapidly changing times and no one knows what might happen.

With all good wishes to you and your cause,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 24. To D.D. Kosambi<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
22 May 1946

Dear Kosambi,<sup>2</sup>

I have your letter of the 16th May. I agree with you that we should try to raise the general level of scientific papers at the Science Congress. It would be very desirable if eminent scientists from abroad, more specially from China, could come to our next meeting. Invitations should be sent to them in the normal way. I do not think it would be proper for me to send odd invitations directly. The question should be handled by the office of the Science Congress Association which should then issue proper invitations. I suggest that you get in touch with that office. You might tell it that I am in full agreement with this proposal.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Collection.

2. (1907-1966); a mathematician and historian of great distinction.

**25. To S.R. Qureshi<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
25 May 1946

Dear Mr. Qureshi,

I have your letter. I am concerned to learn of your difficulties. But it does seem a little absurd for you and the young girl to want to commit suicide. That is a very feeble way of escape from a difficulty and it is not worthy of any worthwhile person. We are passing through a period of transition and always during such periods social misfits and maladjustments happen. Unfortunately individuals have to suffer for this.

I am afraid I cannot write to individuals whom I do not know, especially in personal matters. I would suggest to you and the girl to consider the matter carefully, come to a decision, whatever that may be, and carry it out. In no event is it advisable to think of taking one's life when every Indian owes a duty to serve his country.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A copy of this letter is available in Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Fund. The identity of the addressee is not known.

**26. Fazl-i-Husain<sup>1</sup>**

This is a personal memoir but it is something much more, for Mian Fazl-i-Husain's outstanding and dominating personality played an important role in Indian politics, and more especially Punjab politics, for fifteen years. Each of our major provinces has a certain personality of its own. The Punjab has been a peculiar mixture of vitality and progress in many directions and political backwardness. Its politics till

1. Foreword written on 31 May 1946 by Jawaharlal to a political biography of Fazl-i-Husain (1877-1936), founder of the Unionist Party in the Punjab and a member of the Governor-General's Executive Council, 1930-35, by his son, Azim Husain.

recently have been largely clan politics mixed up with a triangular communal situation and a conflict between the interests of the urban and rural areas. This book helps us to some extent to understand this background and the role of the Punjab in Indian politics in recent years. Our present-day problems have their roots in these years and one who seeks to unravel them must therefore understand what took place then. I have profited by reading this book, and others who do so will also, I have no doubt, profit and gain understanding.

**27. To Govind Ballabh Pant<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
26 May 1946

My dear Pantji,

You will remember my telling you about an American engineer and architect who served some years in India with the American army. Subsequently he helped in drawing up plans for Shriniketan. He was also a member of a Government of Bengal committee. I felt that he would be a good man to advise us about rural planning and reconstruction as he had some good ideas on this subject. You asked me to get into touch with him. Thereupon I wrote to him and suggested his coming down to India for six months or so. I have just received a cable from him a copy of which I enclose.<sup>2</sup> The cable is not quite clear in some places, but you will understand what he means. Please let me know what I am to reply to him. If you like you can get someone to communicate with him directly. His address is: Albert Mayer, 31 Union Square West, New York City.

Yours,  
Jawahar

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. Albert Mayer stated in his cable dated 18 May 1946 that he would initially visit India for three months for exploratory work.

## 28. Virtues Needed in a Period of Transition<sup>1</sup>

India is passing through a period of transition. Transition is always fraught with danger. It is the duty of every Indian, particularly the students, to face the future with courage, determination, dignity and unity of purpose. It is only with discipline that we will be able to shape the greater India of our dreams. Petty squabbles and bickerings should find no place in your organisation. Concentrate on wider issues.

1. Message to the annual session of All Assam Students Union, Dibrugarh, 1 June 1946. *National Herald*, 6 June 1946.

## 29. To Albert Mayer<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
June 5, 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

Thank you for the cable you sent me. I am sorry for the delay in answering it. I have been busy in Delhi with negotiations with the members of the British Cabinet here. Apart from this, I wanted to refer to Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant, Prime Minister of the U.P. Government. I understand that he has sent you a cable enquiring from you your terms for coming here as well as some idea of the total expenses involved. He would naturally like to know exactly what this expenditure is likely to be.

As you must know, political and other conditions here at the present moment are in a state of flux and no one knows definitely what the immediate future is going to be. Inevitably our future activities will be conditioned by this future. Nevertheless we do not want merely to wait on events and we are anxious to get things moving as rapidly as possible.

Among our major problems is village housing and rehabilitation. This, as you yourself pointed out to me, is some thing much bigger than

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

merely construction of houses. It is an attempt to build up a connected life in harmony with the environment and social customs and at the same time to offer a higher standard of living and such modern conveniences as are practicable and within our means. The problem itself is a vast one and we may have to experiment before we can find an adequate solution. Any solution will have to consider and combine modern techniques with existing Indian conditions. These conditions include of course the extreme poverty of the people and all that follows from this poverty.

It is a little difficult for me to go into much detail at this stage. From time to time various plans have been made by our Provincial Governments. We wanted to consult you especially because you could bring to bear upon the problem not only a knowledge of modern techniques and developments but also some knowledge of Indian conditions and background. Your experience, I believe, has been chiefly based on Bengal. Conditions are somewhat different in the United Provinces. Indeed they differ in different parts of the province. If you come here, you will, I hope, be able easily to appreciate the conditions prevailing here and to advise accordingly. You would first of all consult with the Ministers in charge of these developments as well as the other officers concerned.

It will probably save time if you communicate directly with the Prime Minister of this Province. But if you write or cable to me I shall forward that on to the Prime Minister.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**30. To Albert Mayer<sup>1</sup>**

17 June 1946

Dear Mr. Mayer,

I have received your letter of May 20th and, as I cabled to you, I sent it on to the U.P. Prime Minister, Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant. Subsequently I had a talk with him also and I understand that he has sent

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

a cable to you. He has pointed out in this that the rainy season having begun in India, it will be difficult to start any major operations before this season is over. It is not easy to visit many parts of the rural areas during the rains. He has suggested that you might, therefore, come in October if that is convenient to you, and meanwhile you might communicate by correspondence with his Government. His idea is that you should send any suggestions previously or in case you want any particular type of information this could be sent to you.

I am inclined to agree with this conclusion. I do not know how far this postponement of your visit to October fits in with your plans. From every other point of view it is desirable to begin round about October when the weather is more or less agreeable and you can have a clear six months to push on any undertaking or experiment. Just at present also prospective political changes as well as the food situation are coming in the way of the consideration of other problems.

As you say rightly this is going to be more or less of a pioneering job. Of course many people have thought about it and prepared plans, but usually they have been isolated plans dealing with one aspect of the question only. The proper way to view it, as you mentioned to me, is to look at it as a whole with various aspects inter-linked. We want to raise living standards and to train people to utilise them to the full. We want, in other words, to build up community life on a higher scale without breaking up the old foundations. We want to utilise modern techniques and fit it into Indian resources and Indian conditions. This is not an easy matter for the resources are limited at present and the conditions are often very different from those in western countries. But that it can and should be done I have no doubt. Probably a number of experiments will have to be made before we hit upon the right method of tackling the problem. Or it may be that there are several methods which can be simultaneously pursued. It is a job which appeals to me strongly though I have no technical competence to draw up schemes etc. From the talks we had in Allahabad I feel that not only your technical knowledge and experience but even more so your psychological approach to these problems will be of great help. The average American might well feel disgusted with many things in India which are entirely new to him and which do not fit in with his scheme of life. I think you will not feel that way.

For the present you are not likely to get much help from the U.P. Government. This Government, in spite of change at the top, functions in the old grooves and is not used to thinking in a social way. But changes are in the air and more and more people want to bring about social improvement on a large scale. I feel that with your ideas and experience, if we once get going, there would be plenty of popular backing. Just at

the beginning some people, used to the old type of authoritarian British expert, who neither understood nor cared to understand Indian conditions, might view any foreign intrusion with some suspicion. Our people have naturally developed a number of complexes during these past generations of foreign rule and foreign exploitation. But we can get over them given the chance.

As regards the question of remuneration, what you suggest is certainly not much from the American standard. Indian standards are lower. Still this question need not worry us at this stage. When you come here we can discuss this matter personally and I feel sure there will be no difficulty.

I had a letter a few days ago from Frances Gunther in which she mentioned meeting you and discussing your proposed visit to India. She specially mentioned your concern for your children. I hope that you will write to me of any problem or difficulties in regard to your coming to India which might trouble you. We shall, of course, try to help.

With all good wishes,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 31. To Horace Alexander<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
June 18, 1946

Dear Horace,

Arthur Lall gave me the enclosed letter addressed to you by B.R. Sen. I consulted the Congress President and other colleagues about it. They will be happy to meet the Food Commission from America.<sup>2</sup> But it is exceedingly difficult to fix any engagement definitely. We do not know how many of us will be here on the 25th June. Nor do we know what

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

2. A four-member American mission, sponsored by the U.S.-India Famine Emergency Committee, under the leadership of Dr. Theodore W. Schultz, arrived in India on 24 June 1946 for touring the areas threatened by famine.



urgent engagements may have to be fixed up suddenly then. Subject to this, we would be glad to meet the members of the commission.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

### 32. To Aftab Iqbal<sup>1</sup>

New Delhi  
18 June, 1946

Dear Mr. Aftab Iqbal,<sup>2</sup>

Thank you for your letter of the 14th June which I read with appreciation. It is comforting to know that others appreciate one's activities and views. The future is likely to be a troubled one for India, but out of it surely there will arise a strong prosperous and united India in which the communal question, which troubles us so much today, will be a thing of the past.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.
2. An advocate of Lahore.

### 33. The Postal Strike<sup>1</sup>

Many people had heard of the coming of the postal strike, but this morning all India suddenly became conscious of it, and if no specific step is taken it is likely to be acutely conscious of it for a considerable time. A postal strike is always a calamity to the public and is to be avoided as far as possible. In labour disputes generally, and more particularly in regard to essential services, a civilized government and society provide other methods of settlement than that of the strike. Unfortunately our Government and social structure function differently.

1. Statement to the press, Bombay, 11 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 12 July 1946.

I am not in a position to express an opinion about the detailed demands of the postal employees, although during the last five or six months the matter has come up before me on several occasions. *Prima facie*, the lower-paid postal employees are badly paid and live a hard life. Their service is known for its honesty, integrity and hard work and inevitably one's sympathy goes to them.

One fact which is significant is that the Postal Inquiry Committee which functioned a year and half ago under the chairmanship of Mr. Krishna Prasad, the present Director-General of Posts and Telegraphs, presented a report in April 1945 which was suppressed. Why was it suppressed by the Government, although from all accounts it was an unanimous report? This suppression does not bring credit to the Government.

As I have said, I am unable to express any specific opinion about the demands, but I am quite convinced that this matter as a whole ought to have been referred to adjudication or arbitration. One very small aspect of the question relating to interim relief to men on new scales of pay has been referred to adjudication and the award is expected soon. But this does not cover the main points at issue.

I would strongly urge both the Government and the All-India Postal Union to accept a full adjudication or arbitration of the entire dispute. There can be a timelimit fixed for this and any recommendations or decisions may be made subject to the future findings of the Pay Commission which had begun considering the whole subject of official salaries, etc. If this step is taken it will be fair and honourable to all concerned and will bring relief to the public also who are suffering from this strike.

These same considerations also apply to the telegraph employees who have given notice of a strike. I would urge that their case also should be referred to adjudication or arbitration.

#### 34. Telegram to Lord Wavell<sup>1</sup>

Would earnestly request you to refer postal dispute to adjudication on all points in issue. This course fair to all parties concerned. All India

1. Undated in the source, but clearly sent by 11 July 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-67/1946, p.10, N.M.M.L.

postal strike causing great inconvenience to public and provincial governments. Considerable sympathy for postmen among labour circles and public generally. Continuation of strike may lead to deterioration of situation.

Jawaharlal Nehru

### 35. Floods in Bengal and Assam<sup>1</sup>

More than any other part of India, Bengal and especially East Bengal, has to face misfortune and calamity. Bengal and extensive areas in Assam are now submerged in flood and large numbers of people are homeless and on the verge of starvation. Mrs. Nellie Sen-Gupta has appealed to us for immediate financial help. I can only give all possible support to this urgent appeal and urge our people to give help financially and by personal service. Already many of our organisations, well-known for their beneficial help on such occasions, have taken steps to afford relief. The first and immediate responsibility rests with the Government but we cannot remain passive in the face of public calamity and everyone who can help should help.

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad 20 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 21 July 1946.

### 36. The Problem of Postal Employees<sup>1</sup>

All of us have been troubled greatly by the development of the strike situation in the postal, telegraph and allied services. This is not merely a matter of inconvenience but of the closing up of the vital arteries of the nation's life. The whole community is affected, business suffers, Government work is held up, and generally every activity begins to dry up. Normally speaking, there should never be any need for such strikes

1. Statement to the press, Delhi, 23 July 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 24 July 1946.

of essential services and some automatic method should exist for settling all disputes impartially, swiftly and efficiently. Such a strike affects the whole community directly in many ways. The demands of the strikers have another important effect for inevitably they produce their reactions on other services and on the national budget. The burden must fall on the community. So it is essential that the problem be viewed in its entirety and not isolated from this wider context.

Most of us sympathise with the desire of the lower-paid members of essential public services to raise their standard of living. They are hard worked and deserve well of the community. Indeed higher standards of pay and living will mean greater efficiency also. At the same time it has always to be remembered that one essential service should not hold up the nation or profit, by virtue of its strategic position, at the cost of other services or the people at large. If this happens there will be a reaction against that service and the sympathy that exists today will vanish.

I feel that there has been much mishandling of the situation by the governmental authorities during past months. Repeatedly they were asked to agree to arbitration or adjudication, but they did not agree or agreed only in part. The only right way of dealing with such matters is by adjudication and if this had been accepted right at the beginning much of the subsequent trouble would have been avoided. Now we are forced to consider the issues in a hurry and under threat of undesirable consequences. However, I trust that the efforts that are being made in New Delhi and in Poona to arrive at a settlement will meet with success. The Congress premiers have naturally a responsibility in this matter and I am glad that the Bombay Prime Minister has taken the initiative.

I would appeal to the employees of the postal, telegraph and allied services not to forget the country's interests in making or pressing their demands. A sectarian approach in such vital matters leads to wrong results in the end. The ultimate test must always be what benefits the masses of our people.

### **37. Strike by Employees of the Imperial Bank<sup>1</sup>**

India is experiencing a wave of strikes. Whatever may be said about particular strikes, it is obvious that this is very significant of the economic

1. Statement to the press, Allahabad, 1 August 1946. *The Hindustan Times*, 2 August 1946.

background in the country today. It shows that the old structure cannot last. Several major strikes have been going on, and now from today yet another strike has started, that of the employees of the Imperial Bank of India.

I have looked into the correspondence in regard to the strike of the employees of the Imperial Bank. The first thing that strikes me is the astonishingly low salaries of men who have to handle large sums of money.

Apart from any other argument, these figures themselves are eloquent proofs.

Then their hours of work are scandalously long. I am told that Imperial Bank employees in the Madras and Bombay circles are paid much more than in the Bengal circle. Indeed, nearly all the demands made in the Bengal circle are extended by conditions prevailing in the Madras and Bombay circles. If this is so, it seems to me very extraordinary that the employees in the Bengal circle should be treated differently.

In a letter dated June 10 on behalf of the Employees Association a suggestion was made that the matter be referred to adjudication. A strike notice was also issued. Later the bank directors made it known that they were considering the demands favourably and on this basis asked for a postponement of the strike. This was done. On July 15 the directors communicated their new proposals, which were considered wholly insufficient. In their letter they stated that if their proposals were not agreed to they were prepared for the matter to be adjudicated upon.

I cannot understand why there was no adjudication in spite of agreement of both parties to it. Evidently, the Government machinery has failed to function. Meanwhile, a new strike notice was given and from today the strike has begun. The issues are simple enough and should be decided in a businesslike way within a few hours. But if this cannot be done, the obvious course is to have adjudication.

### 38. To Jainarain Vyas<sup>1</sup>

Allahabad  
1.8.1946

My dear Vyasji,

...I enclose a cheque for Rs. 150. This is for a lady who is apparently in the Agra Hotel, Daryaganj, Delhi. I enclose a telegram I have received. She is Savitri Devi, an Irish woman who has long been very ill

1. A.L.S.P.C. File No. 54, (Pt. II), p. 38, N.M.M.L. Extracts.

with cancer etc. She has been operated upon repeatedly with little success. I do not know what to do about her except to give her some help from time to time. She is not likely to survive for long. Could you kindly give this money personally to her if you can find her?

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

**39. To Manager, Ritz Cinema, Lahore<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
1 August 1946

Dear Sir,

I have seen an advertisement of yours in the *Tribune* newspaper in which it is stated that a film known as "Veer Kunal" was highly appreciated by me. My picture is also given.

I have never seen or heard of this film, much less appreciated it. I should like to know why you have made a statement which has no foundation in fact. It is very objectionable to exploit individuals for the advance of your business. I shall await your reply and expect you to make a public correction of your wrong statement.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.

**40. To A.G. Fraser<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
August 4, 1946

My dear Fraser,

Forgive me for the delay in answering your last letter. Soon after writing to you I received intimation from my bank of the receipt of £150

1. J.N. Collection.

that you had sent. This intimation had unfortunately got mixed up with some other papers during my absence from Allahabad and had therefore not been forwarded to me. I am handing over this money for the training of orphan children rescued from the Bengal famine. I think you will like this use of the money. The All India Women's Conference is in charge of some of these training centres and my sister, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, has been specially interested in them. She was partly responsible for starting them as President of that Conference. £150 is roughly equivalent to Rs. 2000/-. I am giving this sum to the Women's Conference for this particular purpose.

I have read with interest the account of your son's activities in Nyasaland. I am sorry your old college Achimota has fallen on evil times.

You are right in thinking that Kashmir and Hyderabad are terribly mis-governed. I have recently returned from a second visit to Kashmir. The problems before us, political and even more so economic, are tremendous. Yet one has to face them and face them with confidence.

With all good wishes to you,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 41. To Inayatullah Khan<sup>1</sup>

7.8.46

Dear Sardar Saheb,<sup>2</sup>

I have received your letter of July 5th. As I wrote to you previously, it is not possible for us to take any steps in regard to your detention and maintenance allowances so long as there is no complete change in the Government of India and more especially the Political Department. We cannot influence the present Political Department in any way. From what you say in your letter, it appears that the treatment accorded to you is unjust and unworthy. The larger question of your detention raises some international issues as between India and Afghanistan. But

1. Extracts from Maharashtra Govt. Home Deptt. (Special) File No. 3/MA/42-II.
2. Inayatullah Khan and two others, who were tribal chiefs from Afghanistan, had been detained by the British government in Pune for six years because they had opposed the Afghan Government in 1939.

the question of treatment is purely one for the Government of India to decide and there appears to be no reason why this treatment should be so niggardly.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

#### 42. Mahadev Desai<sup>1</sup>

It is difficult to write about one who was a dear friend and comrade and with whom are associated so many intimate memories. As I think of him, these memories revive and the past rises up bringing a procession of pictures of days gone by.

There are so many things we take for granted, even friends. Mahadev had become some kind of an institution for many of us. Quiet, able, efficient, hard-working, forgetful of self, utterly devoted, the more one knew him, the more he grew in one's estimation and liking. For nearly a quarter of century we knew each other and often we worked together at common tasks. What he did, he did well and thoroughly. He had the scholar's outlook and at the same time the human touch which endears. So our affection and admiration for him grew, and when suddenly he was no more, there was a gulf and a vacuum and a feeling of desolation seized us. For one who formed so much a part of our lives and our work was no more, a dear comrade had gone, and there was no one to take his place.

Yet his memory endures and cheers and strengthens us. For the days of trial are not over and the future is full of difficulty. How we wish that Mahadev was with us now with his wise and friendly counsel.

1. 10 August 1946. Message on the fourth death anniversary of Mahadev Desai, *Harijan*, 18 August 1946.



43. To P.C. Mahalanobis<sup>1</sup>

Wardha  
10 August 1946

My dear Mahalanobis,

Your letter<sup>2</sup> of the 7th August has just been handed to me today and soon after I received another copy by post. I should very much like to meet you before you return to Europe. My programme, even my immediate programme, is rather uncertain. But so far as I know at present, I shall reach Bombay on the 15th morning and stay there at least 3 days, possibly 4 or 5. As you are likely to leave India on the 20th, we might perhaps meet in Bombay on the 15th or 16th or even 17th. On all these days I shall be pretty busy with other activities but I shall certainly find time to meet you and Deshmukh.<sup>3</sup>

I like the idea of your inviting some scientists and technicians from abroad to visit India next winter. I would suggest that in the invitation Russian scientists might be included. I suppose this is a question involving funds, for the visiting scientists will presumably be the guests of the Indian Science Congress Association.

I am glad you developed contacts with people in the U.S.A. and U.K. in regard to planning and development. Certainly please continue to do this work.

I shall be glad to help you in any way I can to further the work of the Indian Statistical Institute. My difficulty is that I do not quite know what I shall be doing and where I shall be a few days or a few weeks hence. I lead a hand to mouth existence so far as time and engagements are concerned.

I have asked Pitambar to come to Bombay on the 15th.

Hoping to meet you in Bombay,

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. A.I.C.C. File No. G-8/1946-47, Pt. II, p. 487, N.M.M.L.
2. Mahalanobis wrote that during his tour of the U.S. and Britain he had met people engaged in planning and development and some scientists were willing to visit India.
3. C.D. Deshmukh (1896-1982); joined the I.C.S. in 1918; Governor of the Reserve Bank of India 1943-49; President, Indian Statistical Institute, Calcutta, 1945-64; Member, Planning Commission, 1950; Minister of Finance, Government of India, 1950-56; Chairman University Grants Commission, 1956-60; Vice-Chancellor, University of Delhi 1962-67.

#### 44. Organisation of Labour<sup>1</sup>

Whereas the Congress has to play an increasingly active role in helping the working class to organize itself on sound and healthy lines, to achieve its rightful place in industry and society and to make a progressive contribution towards raising the economic and social standards in this country, the Committee have come to the conclusion that a central agency should be provided to encourage, support and coordinate the efforts and activities of Congressmen in the field of labour organization and the service of the working class. The Committee note with satisfaction that the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh has been functioning in this field for a number of years, and has built up a policy, tradition and machinery well calculated to advance and fulfil the aims which the Congress has in view in relation to labour. The Committee recommend to Congressmen to make the fullest use of the facilities provided by the Sangh for the service of the working class, and to accept its guidance in dealing with labour questions.

In order to give effect to the above resolution a committee consisting of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Lala Gulzarilal Nanda and P.H. Patwardhan is appointed to confer with the Hindustan Mazdoor Sevak Sangh and report to the Working Committee.

1. Resolution drafted by Jawaharlal and passed at the meeting of the Congress Working Committee, Wardha, 12 August 1946. A.I.C.C. File No. G-45/1946, p. 145, N.M.M.L.

#### 45. Basic Education and the Future of India<sup>1</sup>

All of you have been introduced to each other. Here there are people from the Talimi Sangh, Samagra Gramseva, Khadi Vidyalaya and other

1. Speech at Wardha, 14 August 1946. *Khadi Jagat*, September 1946. Original in Hindi.

institutions.<sup>2</sup> There are children as well as adults, trainees as well as trainers. Before such a gathering what shall I say? Shall I talk about the children or adults? If I say something concerning the children, the adults will not feel interested in it, and if I speak about the adults the children will not feel happy.

The people from four, five institutions who have gathered here have come to learn something or the other. When I came here four years ago Sevagram was too small a place. Only a cottage belonging to Bapuji was there. But it went on expanding and now it has become a hive of constructive activities. People from all over India come here either to learn or teach.

It is no small task to raise the level of forty crore people in this country. You must be noticing that the newspapers are full of political news. But politics cannot solve all the problems, it only opens the door and clears the way for doing the work ahead. The rule of the British is still continuing in the country. We will oust this rule. But after the end of this rule what will be the form of administration? If in the days to come, even after the departure of the British, the administrative machinery remains the same as today then it would be of no avail. Therefore we will have to change the present system of administration. We will have to remove the poverty of the country. Everyone should get food and clothing in an equal measure, and nobody should remain unemployed. The wealth of the country should increase. What is, after all, wealth? Are gold and silver wealth? If you are lost in a jungle or stranded in a lonely place or in a desert and if in your purse there are only currency notes and gold and silver, and if you feel hungry then they will not serve your purpose. When one is hungry, only foodgrains or fruit are required. Gold and silver are meant only for exchange and trade. Gold and silver facilitate exchange. What people produce by their labour is wealth. The greater the production the greater the wealth. The greater the number of producers in a country the richer that country. Therefore the real wealth of a country is the toiling masses—men and women. If they do not know how to work they are a burden on the country.

In our country there are also a large number of ascetics and mendicants. They are about 50 to 60 lakhs in number. They are mere beggars. They do not produce anything by their labour. They are simply a burden on the country.

2. The Sevagram institutions at Wardha, the Khadi Vidyalaya, the Hindustani Talim Sangh, the Go-Seva Sangh and the trainees under the Kasturba Gandhi National Memorial scheme had invited Jawaharlal to meet them.

Every man consumes some food and wears clothes. This is consumption. The thing that is consumed is, after all, produced by someone. But one who does not earn by one's own labour but goes on spending only commits a blunder. Those who do not earn are either unemployed or they do not get any opportunity to work. But even those who do not work have to eat food.

There is another category of people like that of zamindars in our country, who like to eat without doing any work. The kisan labours throughout the year and earns and the zamindar usurps the fruit of his labour free of charge. These zamindars only know how to spend but not to work. Such zamindars and idle people are a burden on the country. The greater the number of workers in a country the richer that country.

Look at the history of India. When the Englishmen had not come here there were all sorts of crafts and occupations. But now all those have ceased to exist. Unemployment increased and is still increasing. Famines took place which took a toll of millions of lives. Thus there are a large number of problems in our country. In order to resolve them we have to open the door of politics. Today the reins of the government of the country are in the hands of the British. We have to take them in our hands. Therefore our first requirement is Swaraj. All of us have to work for it. By 'all of us' I mean all the people of the country. By general agreement we should do some such work as may benefit the people of the country most. This work should be such that no one should remain unemployed. Children go on growing and add to the national wealth. Therefore we should plan our work in such a manner that everyone should get work and that too according to his ability and aptitude. There are all sorts of people in the country. Some are intelligent, some unintelligent, some know some art and some are quite ignorant. All kinds of people are there. All of them are not alike. If today we go to some village and compare the people of that village with the cultured people of some city, then we will find a lot of evils in the former. But doing so would not be proper. The question of ability or the lack of it arises when both are given an equal opportunity to progress and everyone gets food and clothing in an equal measure. Then we can talk about comparison. If someone does not get even food or clothing then how can the question of his education arise? If one gets proper food, clothing and has sound health, only then his efficiency increases and he is successful in increasing the wealth of the nation.

If someone makes a chair from wood we can call it as increasing the wealth. Increasing the amount of money by charging interest on it cannot be called increasing the wealth. The wealth produced by labour

alone is real wealth. Wealth does not increase by transferring money from someone's pocket to one's own pocket. The greater the number of workers in a country the greater the country progresses. The number of workers in a country should increase. Here in Sevagram everyone is inclined to do work.

Swaraj we will get but to work it is a difficult task, the reason being that we never got an opportunity to learn this work. There are colleges which have produced many B.A.s and M.A.s. Most of these people have become lawyers. Lawyers do not do all the work of a nation. If in a country everyone became a lawyer then the country would become lifeless. If all the lawyers of a country were driven out even then there would be no loss. But if instead of lawyers, farmers were driven out then the country would be shaken. When scavengers strike work, we cannot do without them. Those who perform menial work are looked down upon by the society. That is a great mistake. Rather we should show more respect to such persons. The various projects that have been undertaken at the Sevagram are the basic works.

Today we need a number of engineers to construct roads. We need lakhs of such engineers. Doctors are required in lakhs. Teachers are required in lakhs. Such trained workers are very much required by the country. Lawyers are there even now in large numbers but excepting law they do not know anything else. Many of our politicians, when they retire, do not know what to do because they do not know at all how to work. You are at least getting an opportunity to learn something. A country is big not because there are two or three big persons in it but because the common man is big and follows high ideals. All the organs of the society should be strong. Only such a country gets strong and stabilizes itself soon. Hence the necessity to do all these basic works. It is why Mahatmaji has given so much importance to these basic works and has introduced the system of imparting education to children through basic works.

Therefore we should think how our children should grow. After 10, 15, 20 years all these children will become adults. They will have to shoulder the responsibility of managing the affairs of the country. Therefore if our children receive proper education then the picture of future India that will emerge will also be good. If this kind of basic education is not possible, then Swaraj is of no use. All these basic works of this place are very significant. You please learn all these well and when you go back to your provinces teach them well. I am happy to see all this. *Jai Hind.*

**46. To Gopinath Bardoloi<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad  
26 August 1946

My dear Bardoloi,

Thank you for your letter of the 2nd August which you sent through Fakhruddin. I have got rather mixed up about the publication of translations of my book and cannot at present refer to my old register. I presume that I have not given the permission to any one else. Accordingly I am agreeable to Principal Hemkanta Baruah translating my book *Letters from a Father to His Daughter* into Assamese. Usually I deal with publishers and not with translators and I should like to know who is going to publish it. The usual terms are: 10% royalty to the author on books sold and 5% to the translator.

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Papers, N.M.M.L.

**47. To Sri Prakasa<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
August 29, 1946

My dear Prakasa,

Thank you for your letter<sup>2</sup> which only reached me today. It is always pleasant to hear from you and to think of old times. But why will you think and write as if you were past your prime. You will have to do all manner of big things yet and nobody is going to excuse you, for after all our stock of efficient human material is very limited.

With love,

Yours affectionately,  
Jawaharlal

1. J.N. Collection.
2. On 21 August 1946 Sri Prakasa wrote: "I almost feel my task is done with the vision of Swaraj that I had scarcely hoped to see...I feel least fit for any type of active work."

**48. To S. Radhakrishnan<sup>1</sup>**

New Delhi  
August 30, 1946

My dear Radhakrishnan,

Yesterday I glanced through a letter from you but unfortunately I cannot find it now. So I am answering from memory.

You were good enough to offer me, on behalf of the Benares University, an honorary doctor's degree. I remember many years ago when the Allahabad University made a similar offer to me. I was ungrateful enough then, for various reasons, chiefly political, not to accept it. Though those reasons do not apply now yet I rather hesitate. Still I do not quite see how I can refuse to accept the honour you are good enough to offer, more especially from the Benares University. So I accept the honour with gratitude. But I really do not know where I shall be on the date you mention and what I shall be doing then.<sup>2</sup>

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. J.N. Correspondence, N.M.M.L.
2. After sending this letter, Jawaharlal wrote a second letter the same day. "I have got hold of your letter. In addition to what I said in my letter to you of today's date, I should like to say that it would be an additional honour to me to be associated on this occasion with Dr. Tai Chi tao, who is a good friend of mine."





**10**

## **APPENDIX**



1. To Jayaprakash Narayan<sup>1</sup>

Houlgate (France)  
2-8-38

My dear Jayaprakash,

Your cable has been forwarded to me here but it does not say where you are at present. I am scuding a reply to Patna suggesting that you might wait. I do not think it will be desirable for you to include my name among the foundation members of the proposed Socialist Book Club. I don't know what the idea is, except of course generally. It seems to me that any book club venture must be very carefully organised, especially on the business side. I have been going into this matter with Gollancz and others and I have found that without this preparation such ventures are likely to fail. It seems to me that we are too eager to start ventures without thinking out how they will get on. We are always in difficulties and a succession of failures cling to us. We started the Nationalist Publications Society with Shah & Narendra Deva & others and it is in a dormant state. There is the proposal to start a daily from Lucknow and this is also in a bad way. I would much rather concentrate on something we have already begun than start a new venture.

The Left Book Club has succeeded because of Gollancz's business ability and a certain wide appeal that he made outside socialist circles. I do not see any comparable ability on our side.

Besides I feel that all our politics are getting far too much in the ruts and we must get them going on the right lines. What I shall do on my return to India, I do not know but I want to keep myself detached at present so far as I can. We must see the whole problem and not lose ourselves in minor aspects of it. Therefore I would rather not associate myself with a new venture.

I have come here as much for some rest as for writing work. I hope, before returning to India, to visit Russia and Turkey but I am not sure of it yet.

I hope you are well.

Yours affly.,  
Jawaharlal

1. Brahmanand Papers, N.M.M.L.

## 2. The Future of Heavy and Cottage Industries<sup>1</sup>

Mahatma Gandhi: Hand spinning is the only occupation that can be universalised. But there should be no coercion — to make people do what is good for them. The Congress is wedded to nonviolence. If you agree with me moral coercion is the only policy we can think of in a democracy.

Jawaharlal Nehru: Where does coercion come in? Is a tax a coercive process?

MG: My point is that unless you put planning in an attractive manner it won't catch on or cause a change. My remarks are only for Rao's note.<sup>2</sup> Hand spinning has been mentioned at the end of the note — I hold that hand spinning and allied cottage industries should be encouraged and subsidised.

V.K.R.V. Rao: 'The object of my note is to show that our methods may not solve the present problems. You do not envisage the economy on the development of cities. You envisage village communes — no radios, no motors — and they can exist without machinery, on cottage industries. But I would like a different standard for villages. With sufficient planning these are possible. But till that time comes cottage industries must be helped.

JN: The objective of planning must be to raise the standard of the masses by greater production, may be through cottage industries or anything else. Hand spinning and weaving should be encouraged by the State in the widest possible way. The basis cannot be on this plan, however. Therefore, it is a question of emphasis — details of how subsidies are to be given are immaterial.

1. Extracts of an undated note written by Amrit Kaur of a discussion at Wardha presumably held in April 1940. Portions of the note that are relevant to Jawaharlal's contribution to the discussion have been summarised. The note is available in Amrit Kaur Papers in N.M.M.I..
2. V.K.R.V. Rao argued that hand spinning, which provided employment to thousands, would not be able to face the competition of millcloth. Direct subsidy to hand spinning would not be a solution. Closure of mills would hamper national growth. So he suggested nationalization of the textile industry and adjustment of prices of millcloth with hand-spun cloth to ensure a balance in the sale.

You must consider — apart from what civilisation one aims at — that it is not possible for cottage industries to flourish so long as the State is not powerful enough. This power cannot come without industrialisation. You may sit on your large scale industries, but other countries will sit on you. Our energies will be frittered away.

However if we want to develop cottage industries we must have economic power. No country is independent today which is not industrially developed. The world is made in this way. Even defence has to be considered. Economically and politically what the future will be is difficult to say. World developments, scientific developments, must play an important part. You may not take a static view therefore. New discoveries may knock the bottom out of your industries — cottage or otherwise. All your conceptions may be upset. The development of certain types of large industries, barring textiles, is essential. Many consequences follow. Machines breed machines. But today we want employment for all. Go ahead with vigour. Let the State disallow mill industries to sit on cottage industries. The latter may be able to develop in such a way that we may say let us wind up cloth mills in such an event. But I cannot say so today. I want to push cottage industries to the extent we can. But I cannot conceive India coming into her own without industrialisation. These very industries will help cottage industries. I do not see where violence comes in. Economic coercion is a different thing.

MG: Therefore, I believe that emancipation of people from grinding poverty is possible only by hand spinning. Hand spinning has to be encouraged to the exclusion of mill industry. No quarrel with industrialisation of India or heavy industries. I subscribed to the Karachi Resolution of which I was a part-author. I can't allow myself to be carried away by the vision of future prosperity.

Rao: The present position can't be solved except by subsidy.

MG: The textile industry exists today. So does hand spinning — the former a giant, the latter a dwarf. The Congress decided, in the competition between the textile industry and hand spinning, to take the side of the latter.

JN: We have said that in the event of a competition with village industry if the State controlled it it can lock it up at once. Secondly you can limit, say, counts produced by textile mills. At the moment we are doing propaganda for khadi. But I am not willing to shut up textile mills today because I do not know what the future will be. But

even if we concede that — and spinning has got to be there — and mills must be controlled, what about the purchasing power of the country? You may be producing in a better way but you may not be increasing the purchasing power. Planning cannot think in long distance terms — but we have to have some vision of the future. You must not have a conflict — and long distance planning, while it must think in terms of the present, has to have this vision. Can you change every three months? We can profit by our own and others' experience. Organised planning is essential. Every individual competes with another and the national energy is wasted. Even the textile industry is a powerful sector — it has great resources and may upset your apple cart. Vast numbers of people don't want total destruction and therefore you have all kinds of people lined up against you.

Rao : Poverty must be tackled at once. Therefore we want to give subsidies to hand spinning. All mills will be State-owned and the control will therefore be easy.

N.S. Varadachari:<sup>3</sup> Subsidies cannot solve the question. They are not possible for all time. The State ownership will not help khadi. There will have to be a rigorous exclusion.

Rao: The cottage industry cannot raise the national income to the extent that industrialisation can.

JN: If heavy industries barring textiles are admitted as being necessary India does become heavily industrialised.

I want handicrafts to increase. But villages as they are today are awful. I don't want them to exist. The cottage industry may involve hard work — drudgery and subsidy — not much human values left.

MG: There are very few cottage industries where people slave to eke out a living.

JN: Vague idealisation of the village is wrong. The present day village life is dead. I don't believe that it was full of life ever — even with industry — Oxenlike — Today we can give him some amenities of town life and cultural life can be developed.

3. (b. 1897); was closely associated with the All India Spinners Association; arrested three times during the freedom struggle; Congress Parliamentary Secretary, 1937-39; member, Madras Legislative Assembly, 1950-55.

MG: You will have to be cautious of foreign methods.

JN: What is foreign in science?

MG: Foreign methods mean draining India's wealth.

JN: It is a matter of means of production. Anything that adds to the wealth of the country can't be bad. Capitalism must go. Produce only what is wanted. Planning means that luxury goods are not in the picture. Here almost everything is wasted. The purchasing power may not be there. But things are needed.

MG: The millions of India are unshod. We must educate them to think they want shoes. It does not follow that they want everything.

JN: Supposing electric power were available cheaply, would you accept it for a village and utilise it for cottage industry?

MG : Yes I would, provided there is no unemployment created.

JN: The moment you talk of unemployment you talk in terms of capitalism. No man is really unemployed in a socialistic order. Take Russia. Every man is a producer — he is part and parcel of the nation's wealth. You must see that in theory a certain economic structure will give you ideal conditions. And we proceed towards it nonviolently. Bapu's approach as far as conversion is concerned is right. But you can't make a convert to give up his vested interests. I hate the idea of trusteeship on principle.

MG : Jawaharlal himself is a trustee for the Congress.

JN: But I can be pushed out.

MG: So can the millowners.

Rao: They won't agree to that.

JN: Behind your approach is a pressure which reduces conflict to a minimum. But the idea of trusteeship itself is illogical.

MG : Trustees are allowed to have a commission — a labourer is worthy of his hire.

JN: They are their own employees and therefore it is wrong.

MG: I discovered the nearest approach. Supposing millowners treat labourers as part-proprietors my ideal is fulfilled.

### 3. India's Passage to Freedom<sup>1</sup>

**Question:** How does the Indian National Congress propose to achieve independence?

**Jawaharlal Nehru:** The issue in India today is no longer one of interim arrangements and war-time expedients. Indians want a final settlement that will put an end to British rule, and they want it now.

**Q:** What is your programme for the transfer of power?

**JN:** The Indian people are again on the move. In essence the Indian problem is simple. Britain must decide on the recognition of India as an independent country, and on a freely elected constituent assembly having full authority to frame her constitution. Once this is done, the rest becomes fairly easy, although, no doubt, many hurdles will have to be got over.

I am particularly concerned to avoid a repetition of the deadlock which wrecked the Simla Conference, when the Congress and the Muslim League were unable to agree on Muslim representation.

The easiest and fairest way to proceed is not to deal with parties as such, or with religious or other groupings, but with the provincial legislatures after they are elected. It is unfortunate that their franchise is a limited one. Nevertheless, we shall have something which does represent the people.

**Q:** What subjects should be referred to these provincial assemblies, and how can they be consulted?

**JN:** The first two questions that will arise immediately after the elections will be the convoking of a constituent assembly and the formation of a new central government to function as a "caretaker" until the new constitution comes into effect. In the solution of both of these problems the newly elected provincial legislatures should have the dominant voice.

The eleven legislatures can select delegates from among their members to form a preliminary conference. This may possibly develop into the constitution-making body, and will in any case lay the ground for it.

1. Interview given to Alice Thorner in Delhi on 18 January 1946 and published in the *Nation* (New York), 2 March 1946. Alice Thorner was an analyst of Indian affairs in the Foreign Broadcast Intelligence Service, Federal Communication Commission.



**Q:** Would the Muslims agree to take part in such a conference?

**JN:** The Congress will spare no effort to assure them a fair voice in the proceedings. The delegates from the provincial legislatures can well be elected by the proportional system to allow minority groups full representation. Or, if they prefer the Muslim members of the legislatures can get together and elect their own delegates. It is very unlikely that any provincial legislature as a whole will refuse to cooperate. The Congress, either as the majority party or as the largest single party, expects to form ministries in eight of the provinces; there will probably be coalition governments in the other three. If a Muslim League ministry comes to power in one province and will not join with the others, it will be possible to go ahead without that province and see what will happen later on.

**Q:** Would you comment on the recent statement of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel that Pakistan can be achieved only through a civil War?

**JN:** No question arises of any civil conflict. It is already agreed that the largest possible autonomy should be given to the constituent units of the federation. Ultimately if any particular area wants to walk out, it can do so, provided it clearly expressed its decision on a specific proposal. But if any attempt is made to force areas to remain outside the federation against their will, as Mr. Jinnah suggests, then inevitably there will be conflict.

It must be remembered that there can be no absolute self-determination anywhere. There are some over-riding considerations, such as those of defence, which cannot be ignored. This is especially important in view of the situation developing in the Middle East.

I predict that when Muslims are faced with the actual economic and political problems involved in separating predominantly Muslim areas from the Indian state, they will lose their present enthusiasm for Pakistan.

**Q:** What would be your criterion of the good faith of Britain in the course of these preliminaries?

**JN:** The Labour Government, if it is at all sincere, should recognize the constituent assembly as having final authority. If it is treated merely as a consultative body, then nothing gets at all.

I am also anxious to make clear to American readers the importance of Asia in all world calculations and the key place of Indian independence in the stability of Asia.

Asia is likely to play a far greater role in the future than in the past few hundred years. If there should be, unfortunately, another world war, Asia is likely to be a bigger centre of it than Europe. In any consideration of war or peace in Asia, India is crucial both for the Middle East and for South East Asia. I have little doubt that if India had been given an opportunity to cooperate in the war as a free country, the struggle might have ended a year or two earlier and millions of lives might have been saved. If India gains its independence soon, far-reaching changes will follow in the Middle East and South East Asia, and new and peaceful groupings will develop in certain present day danger spots.

Although I contend that there is no final solution for the world except a federation of free nations, my attitude towards the U.N.O. is "wait and see." The recent policies of Britain and Russia have a warning for the United States.

The events in Indonesia have been bitterly resented all over Asia and especially in India because Indian troops have been used there. What is happening in Iran has also disturbed people here. I recently referred to the United States as to some extent underwriting the British Empire.<sup>2</sup> I did not mean that American policy as a whole was committed in that direction, but there were certainly some trends which I considered dangerous. I can well understand how in the world context today America wants to help Britain in many ways. That is necessary and desirable. But the point is that there must be a distinction between helping Britain and helping the British Empire. To do the latter is really to weaken Britain in the long run as well as those who support her. And the long run is likely to be a short run.

A strong, free India is indispensable to the peace of the world. I call upon Britain in its own best interests to hand over the reins of power to whomever the Indian people choose as their representatives. Once the principle of independence is granted, Muslim demands can be settled within the framework of the Congress programme. My formula hinges on British willingness to leave final decisions on all constitutional matters to an elected constituent assembly. I have stated the terms on which the Congress will undertake to ensure a peaceful transition period.

2. See presidential address to the All India States People's Conference, 30 December 1945; *Selected Works*, Vol. 14, pp. 406-416.

**4. To H.R. Hone<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad,  
27 April 1946

Dear General Hone<sup>2</sup>,

I should like to draw your attention to a letter which has been sent by Lt. Col. A.C. Chatterji<sup>3</sup> at present under detention in the Kabul Lines of the Delhi Cantonment, to the authorities here. I enclose a copy of this letter. You will find that he refers in this to 110 pieces of gold which were taken from him by the British Mission at Hanoi at the time of his surrender on the 22nd of December<sup>4</sup> 1945. I presume that this gold can be easily traced. The first thing to be done is that the gold is placed in proper custody and is not kept with any individual. If this is assured, then the question will arise of its proper utilisation. I would suggest that the money realised from this gold, be also earmarked for relief work among Indians in Malaya, and for this purpose handed over to the Indian Relief Committee there.

Yours sincerely,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

1. File No. 57-39/46-OS II, P. 2/Corr., Commonwealth Relations Department, National Archives of India.
2. Major General H.R. Hone; at this time at the Malayan Union Secretariat, Kuala Lumpur.
3. General Secretary of the Indian Independence League, was in charge of finance in the Provisional Government of Azad Hind.

**5. To E. N. Taylor<sup>1</sup>**

Allahabad,  
6 August 1946

Dear Sir<sup>2</sup>,

I have received a copy of a letter, No. C.P.167/46, dated 3rd June 1946, addressed by you to the Manager, Indian Overseas Bank Limited, Singapore, relating to fifteen packets of gold which Mr. Hardayal Singh<sup>3</sup> of

1. File No. 57-39/46-OS II, p. 2/Corr., Commonwealth Relations Department, National Archives of India.
2. Custodian of Property, Singapore.
3. An Indian merchant in Singapore.

Singapore handed over to the Indian Overseas Bank at my request. I presume that the Colonial Secretary directed you to write this letter under some misapprehension. This matter was discussed by me with Lord Louis Mountbatten, the Supreme Commander, during my visit to Singapore in March last, and it was with his approval that I took the steps I did in regard to this gold. Subsequently there were further talks and correspondence between me and the authorities in Malaya in regard to this matter as well as other funds which used to belong to the Indian Independence League or its branches. It was understood and agreed by Lord Louis Mountbatten that this gold with Mr. Hardayal Singh should be made over to my account with the bank and should subsequently form part of a trust that I was creating for the relief of Indians in Malaya. In regard to other monies no decision was then arrived at.

In view of these facts I trust that there will be no difficulty in our utilising this gold or the equivalent thereof for the purposes mentioned above. I shall be grateful to you for a reply to my letter.

Yours faithfully,  
Jawaharlal Nehru

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During the period from 19 February to 2 September 1946, which this volume covers, some advance was made towards the transfer of power. With popularly elected ministries in the provinces and in the face of growing anti-imperialist feeling, the British Government sent out to India in March 1946 three Cabinet Ministers ... to negotiate a political settlement. After discussions with Indian leaders, the Mission proposed a constitution with a three-tier structure...

Jawaharlal guided and conducted the Congress case during these negotiations with the Cabinet Mission and, after its departure in June 1946, with the Viceroy ...

Jawaharlal, who had been elected President of the Congress on 9 July 1946, was invited to form the interim government and assumed office on 2 September 1946.

